

Love me if you dare Chapter 61-83

Chapter 61

The sound of the waves crashing on the rock fills the study. Inside, everyone is apprehensive.

Chills are running down Jian Yao's spines. After a few seconds, she tells everyone: "Jenny, is my English name."

Everyone is astonished. Even Anam raises his head in shock.

Bo Jinyan looks at her too. His eyes look cold as ice.

"What are you nervous about?" He says flatly.

Everyone looks at each other. Bo Jinyan looks at Jian Yao in the eyes: "He is just saying Hello. It's the only thing he will be able to do to you."

Ten minutes later.

Bo Jinyan is standing with his hands in the pockets of his trousers. Jian Yao is inside one of the police vehicles. The technicians are putting on a tracking device on her. They also fit a small microphone on her shirt collar. Two officers are standing guard beside the vehicle.

Bo Jinyan knew how to break 'his' code. He was doing the calculations in his head as the computer was analysing the data. He got the results a split second before it was shown on screen.

He just feels an anger building up inside of him.

“‘He’ thinks ‘he’ is able to provoke him? It only takes him seconds to completely calm down.

Say hello to Jenny.

He already knows what “he” wants to do next.

Every time “he” says hi, it means someone will be killed.

So “his” next step is to hurt the person that matters most to Jian Yao.

But Bo Jinyan is going to keep it a secret from Jian Yao for now. If she knows about it, she will be worried sick for her family and friends.

An officer runs up to Bo Jinyan: “Professor, we have made contact with the Tung City. We’ve also talked to Jian Yao’s mother and sister. The police will be protecting them.”

Bo Jinyan nods. Then he asks: “What about the guy called Li Xunran?

The officer replies: “Oh, he is an officer himself. He is currently out of town. We haven’t been able to get hold of him yet. This morning, a firework factory in the suburbs of Tung City had an explosion. There’s no casualties, so the local police didn’t report the incident to Ministry of Public Securities. But the latest updates show they found a small amount of flesh residue at the scene. They are currently analysing if it belongs to animals or human....”

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After all the necessary devices have been fitted and tested, Jian Yao sits in another police car with a pen and a piece of paper, deep in thought.

The sky is dark. It’s getting harder to see what’s outside the car. The two officers assigned to protect Jian Yao is still standing next to the car

she is in. This is a request of Bo Jinyan. From now on, they will be protecting her around the clock.

Jian Yao looks around. She sees Bo Jinyan standing outside the front door of the villa. He looks like he is giving the officer some instructions.

Everyone was startled when they saw “his” statement. He was the only one that remained calm and collected, as if he is completely not affected by ‘his’ provocations. But his gaze looks even colder than usual.

He is angry. But he hides it well.

If Bo Jinyan is with her, she has nothing to fear.

He is walking towards her.

Jian Yao is sitting at the backseat. He opens the door and sits beside her. His short hair is a little messed up by wind.

“Are you feeling better?” He asks

Jian Yao smiles at him. Under the lights, her eyes sparkles. Her smooth skin has a nice glow too.

“Yes, I have calmed down for a while now.” She answers: “You are right. I can’t stop others from greeting me.”

Bo Jinyan gives an approving smile. He looks at the pen and paper on her lap: “How’s the profiling coming along?”

The profile Bo Jinyan refers to is “him”. He has passed the task to her. At least, to give it a go.

Jian Yao replies: “I have some ideas.”

Bo Jinyan looks at her. His hands are resting on his knees. He is extremely relaxed. To her, it feels like the master is waiting for a rookie's first performance.

Jian Yao decides to ignore his expression. She starts:

"So far, Lin Yi Yang has the highest possibility of being 'him'. But we can't draw any conclusions yet.

I asked Anam to give me everything he can find on Lin Yi Yang. During the Killer Machine case, Lin Yi Yang was overseas. Then for the rest of the cases, we don't know where he was at the time. But that is not important. As he might have an assistant."

Bo Jinyan nods.

Jian Yao continues: "He is from a rich family, but his childhood was not necessarily a happy one. His father has several mistresses. He was sent to boarding school for his high school years. He was once in trouble with the police over some driving offences. But that's quite typical of a lot of rich young man. So that's not much for us to work on."

Bo Jinyan smiles: "This Anam is fairly useful after all. It's not easy to dig out people's love affairs."

Jian Yao nudges his arm: "So, occasionally you have to encourage him. It helps build relationship. If you guys work together, it will speed up the investigation."

Bo Jinyan gives her a noncommittal look. He keeps quiet.

Jian Yao asks: "What are your thoughts on Lin Yi Yang?"

Bo Jinyan puts his hands behind his head and leans back: "I agree with you. He might be a criminal, but yet he might be a victim too. It's hard to tell at this point."

Right from the start, all the clues are deliberately left by 'him'. Perhaps he led us to Lin Yin Yang. It's part of his plan. We don't know yet. Perhaps Lin Yi Yang is just another Jiang Hao, a scapegoat to divert our attention."

Now she understands why the old officers that come to them for assistance always have a look of desolation on their faces. Even someone as smart as Bo Jinyan cannot predict crimes in advance. It's not possible to protect everyone.

This man, whether he is someone that has no regards for human lives, or he is the notorious Flower Cannibal, or a wealthy young man with split personality....

"We must catch the bastard." She turns and tells Bo Jinyan.

"Nonsense." He replies.

Jian Yao is not angry at his response. Instead, she laughed.

Bo Jinyan asks again: "Let's get back to the point. What conclusions have you come up with about 'him'?"

Jian Yao thinks about all the information and impressions she has on 'him'. Like Bo Jinyan says, all the clues are deliberately left behind by him. They really don't have much to work on. And he knows a lot about criminal psychology. But based on the little information they have, Jian Yao has come up with the following:

"Let's put aside the possibility of whether 'he' is Lin Yi Yang, and profile him as a stranger -

Firstly, the man who kissed Yin Ziqi is around your age. So... between 25 to 35 years old, tall. Not too fat or thin. Smart and strong organisational skills. I suspect he has a history of crimes, perhaps he's

never been caught out, but he definitely has a lot of experience in the area.

And of course he needs to be wealthy, to fund all his crimes.

From a personality perspective, he is puffed up with conceit. He doesn't seem to be releasing any emotions through his crimes. As far as I can tell, he has no feelings or regards for anyone, except for you. He looks upon the crimes as a game. A game with you.

What is his motive? He does not attack you directly. His aim... is to beat you? Because he is Flower Cannibal No.1's accomplice or follower?"

"No." Bo Jinyan lifts his head to look out the window: "I have worked out their relationship."

"He is a spiritual mentor to Tommy."

Jian Yao: "...you mean ... Tommy listens to him?"

Bo Jinyan nods: "The FBI and I originally thought Tommy worked alone because:

1. Serial killers like him generally like to work alone. Working with others don't fit their mental profile.
2. In those six months, there were no traces of anyone else.
3. Tommy is a cunning criminal. He is fully capable of committing all the crimes by himself. So we never suspected there is another person involved.

But everything has exceptions. 'He' is extremely egotistic. He won't want to be under someone else, or even considered to an equal. I think his mind control techniques are over and above Tommy's.

Therefore it's more likely he is an instructor to Tommy. He influenced Tommy, not the other way around.

He is real Flower Cannibal. Tommy should be ranked No.2. As for his aim. It's obvious. His desire 'to conquer' is much greater than 'to revenge'. Because I was the one who sent his protege to prison.

Jian Yao is worried: "What should we do next?"

Bo Jinyan thinks for a while. He turns to look at her.

"Now that we know his motives, we can take proactive measures. I will make a trip to the US, to talk to Tommy. That's where all the root knots lie." He pauses: "But first, we need to go to Tong city."

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Night. A few police cars are traveling on the road to Tong City. There is no direct flight to Tung City, taking the road option will be the fastest.

Jian Yao sits on the backseat of the car. Bo Jinyan is next to her. The two officers protecting her are sitting/driving in the front. Jian Yao is on the phone with her family, assuring them everything will be ok.

After she hangs up, she gave a sigh. She asks Bo Jinyan: "What about Li Xun Ran? Will he be part of the team working with us?"

It's not bright in the car. The lack of light hides the gloomy look on Bo Jinyan's face from Jian Yao. He looks at Jian Yao and says calmly: "We can't locate him yet. He is working out of town."

Jian Yao is a little concerned.

Her hands are sweating. She tries to call Li Xun Ran, but again, it goes straight to voicemail.

She leaves a message for him: "Emergency situation. Please call immediately."

After that, she looks out of the window into the dark scenery outside for a while. Bo Jinyan stretches out his hand to lean her to his chest.

Jian Yao wraps her hands around his waist: "It should be ok. He always switches off his phone when he is working on a big case."

"Umm.." Bo Jinyan says.

Nobody talks. There is only the monotonous and repetitive sound of the engine.

Suddenly, Jian Yao hears Bo Jinyan says: "I was threatened during the investigation of Flower Cannibal No.1."

Jian Yao lifts her head to look at him.

He continues: "I received some wrong information from an FBI agent. I went after Tommy by myself. The others were not there yet. It's an opportunity that will pass quickly if I didn't take it then. It's a street near a primary school. Tommy blew up a school bus in front of me. More than ten children died on the spot. He asked me to put down my gun and get into his car, or else he will blow up the second bus."

It's the first time he is sharing his experience with the Flower Cannibal with Jian Yao.

"All the FBI staff, especially the analysts are told never to compromise with criminals. But I compromised at the time."

Jian Yao tightens her hug: "Why are you telling me this now?"

He looks down at her gently: "Because you need me now."

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It's 5a.m. when they arrive Tung City.

Bo Jinyan and the team went straight to the site of the explosion. Jian Yao went home under the protection of the two police officers.

She is relieved to see her mother and sister safe. But of course they are very concerned. Jian Xuan is asking a lot of questions. As for Jian Yao's mom, there are tears in her eyes, but otherwise, she looks calm. She didn't say much, just told Jian Yao to take care of herself. Jian Yao feels bad for them. She gives them a big long hug, and leaves.

Her mother watches her leave the house. After a long time staring at the door, she turns to Jian Xuan: "Your sister is just like your father. Whatever they think it's right, they will do.... I hope nothing happens to her. Or else, what would your father think..."

Jian Yao arrives the firework factory. There are a lot of staffs there. The area is cordoned off. The place looks like a war zone after fire. There is ash and charred pieces of scraps everywhere.

She walks up to the front gate and sees an older officer. She recognises him: "Uncle Zhou, what's the situation?"

The officer looks at her: "Jian Yao. You are back."

Jian Yao don't have a good sense about this. The officer is a tough man, an ex-colleague of her father. But he has tears on his face right now.

Jian Yao's heart starts to sink. Li Xun Ran!

She rushes in. She sees a few more officers. All of them are crying. Bo Jinyan is standing amongst them, expressionless.

"Jian Yao." He says to her: "I am sorry to have to tell you this."

Jian Yao's mind has gone blank. An sickening feeling swells up inside of her as she hears Bo Jinyan says: "We have results from the DNA testing. The flesh residue we found, belongs to Li Xun Ran."

Jian Yao feels as if someone is stabbing her continuously. Her body starts to shake. Bo Jinyan steps forward and holds her in his arms.

Tears stream down her face uncontrollably.

Li Xun Ran.... Li Xun Ran?

The cool and handsome Li Xun Ran? Her big brother from young? Her best friend who helped match make her with Bo Jinyan? The passionate and devoted police officer?

She is speechless. Everything around her seems to be spinning.

Only Bo Jinyan's familiar voice is coming through the vacuum she is in right now: "We didn't find a suicide note. Perhaps he couldn't be controlled. He is considered missing at this stage. There is still hope."

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Then Bo Jinyan's phone has an incoming text. He takes a look at it, then he calls out : "Anam!"

Anam runs over with his laptop. He takes out more equipment from his backpack.

On Bo Jinyan's phone screen, there's just a phrase - "Now it begins."

Anam grabs the phone and connects it to his equipment. He is trying to trace the origins of the message. He asks whilst his hands are busy: "His message. What does it mean?"

Bo Jinyan pauses for a while, then answers: "Up until now, he is not committed any crime with his own hands. Even the arsonists case, we can connect him to it, but we have no direct evidence that he started the fires."

He pauses again, then he continues: "But now, he is ready do it himself."

Chapter 62

It's past midnight. There has been misty rain all night.

Bo JinYan comes out from the bathroom in his black pyjamas. His hair, still damp, is combed behind his ears. He takes a look at the bed. Jyao is sleeping with her head buried in the pillow. Her long hair scattered on the white bed sheets.

He looks at her for a while. Then he walks over to the window. Drops of water forms and drips down on the window as the soft rain hits the glass. He gives Fu ZiYu a call.

Fu ZiYu does not sound pleased: "Do you know what time it is? I have to perform an operation at 9am tomorrow!"

Bo JinYan looks at the clock on the wall, and answers accurately: "1:20am." He says without any guilt or shame in his voice.

But Fu ZiYu knows he is calling for a reason at this hour, so he asks: "... What's bothering you?"

"We've lost him." Bo JinYan says in a low voice, "He vows to commit more serious crimes. He might be targeting people who are close to me. Please be careful."

Fu ZiYu is quiet for a while, then he says: "Ok. I will. Don't worry about me. How are you and Jian yao doing?"

Bo JinYan answers: "I am fine. But Jian yao.... one of her good friends may have become the Flower Cannibal's victim."

Fu ZiYu gives a small sigh: "Please send my regards."

"Will do."

Fu ZiYu says to him: "I know you are preoccupied with the case. But as a boyfriend, make sure you spend more time with her and comfort her."

His words are what Bo JinYan has in mind. He frowns.

Fu ZiYu waits for a response. But when he doesn't get one for more than a minute, he asks: "What is it?"

Bo JinYan asks faintly: "What should I do to comfort her?"
He sees her grieving for her best friend. But this genius/natural born lover is running out of ideas.

Fu ZiYu smiles. He thinks for a while, then says: "Simple. When she is feeling down, sing to her. I guarantee she will laugh."

Bo JinYan shows disbelief on his face: "No way?!" Then he hangs up.

Jian yao pushes herself to sit up on the bed. She is awake. Her eyes are still swollen from all the crying she did yesterday, her face looks pale under the light.

"Jinyan." She calls him softly.

Bo JinYan walks over and sits down beside her.

He is as handsome as ever. His black eyes looking gently at her. He is concerned about her.

"Are you feeling better now?" He asks with a warm voice.

Jian yao nods: 'Yes, better.'

"Then give me a kiss."

Jian yao's voice is still a little coarse: "Are you a kid?"

Bo JinYan looks at her: "Yesterday, you left at least one litre of tears on my shirt - who's the kid?"

She remembers Li Xun Ran. The crime scene. Li Xun Ran's empty house, his police uniform hanging in his room....

Her heart aches again. She tells herself to be brave. There is still hope. They didn't find a body.

She lifts up her head to look at Bo JinYan: "Have you never cried in your life?"

"No." He replies: "Ever since I was a child. As far I can remember, I have never shed a tear."

Jian yao looks at his face. She tries to imagine Bo JinYan as a kid, never shed a tear.

A lot of old memories suddenly come back to Bo JinYan. He frowns and continues: "But the tragic thing is, a lot of people cried in front of me."

It took Jian yao a moment to understand what he is trying to say.

So, the man that can't cry, don't like to see other people shedding tears in front of him either.

But....

Except for the tears of joy from those whom were saved by him, the others probably cried because of his sharp inconsiderate comments.

But of course she wouldn't tell him that. She reaches out her hand to hug him from behind.

Bo JinYan obviously enjoys the intimacy. She sits quietly, with her face lightly touching his back.

Jian yao asks softly: "Those six month.... how did you survive it?"

Bo JinYan pauses for a while, then he lies down on bed and scoop her into his arms: "Just.. a day at a time, according to my plans. Nothing special about that. As for the injuries, that's just a price that I had to pay."

He says it so lightly. Jian yao knows it must have been very difficult. She is both sad but proud of him. No matter how rough it was, he can dismiss it, just like that.

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It's almost dawn. The rain is getting heavier. The quietness is broken by rolling rumbling sound of thunder from afar.

Bo JinYan opens his eyes. The room is still dark. Jian yao is resting in his arms, sleeping soundly. Her face seems more relaxed. She is not frowning anymore. And the puffiness around her eyes has faded too.

He looks at her quietly, and the question she asked earlier comes back to him: "Those six months... how did you survive it?"

Lots of unimaginable and dreadful scenes come to mind: pools of blood everywhere, dismembered body parts, trays of human flesh, blood that flows down along his back and drips into a glass everyday...

He closes his eye and leans to sniff her hair. The fresh fragrance helps to clear his mind. He goes back to sleep.

He doesn't want to tell her about his past. The truth is too painful for her to bear. There's no need for her to know.

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The next morning. Police conference room.

It's more than 24 hours since the disappearance of Li Xun Ran. The police have deployed a large number of officers to search the neighbouring cities. Highway checkpoints are set up, and there's an alert for all police offices across the country.

The text message Bo JinYan received traced back to a mobile phone that is left in the rubbles of the firework factory. It was installed with a program to automatically send out the text at a preset time. As expected, there's no fingerprint. It's another dead end.

Around the conference table, everyone looks concerned. The team leader of the special team asks Bo JinYan: "Professor Bo, what do you think his next step will be?"

Bo JinYan is wearing a black suit with a white shirt. He stands up and says: "There is no such thing as a perfect crime. There are only evidences that we have not discovered. It's the first time he is personally committing a crime. He will need time to plan and prepare. I guess that take between ten to twenty days."

One of the officers asks: "Professor, why is it between ten to twenty days?"

Bo JinYan answers calmly: "I did an estimate. If it was me who was planning a complicated and sophisticated crime, it would take ten days."

Jian yao is probably the only person there who don't doubt Bo JinYan's estimation. She writes down the numbers in her note book: "10 to 20 days."

Then, Anam, who is quietly sitting at the corner of the room working on his laptop suddenly speaks: "I found something."

Anam picks up the remote. The projector shows an image on screen.

It shows the back of a black SUV driving on the road. Anam explains: "I managed to enlarge the image to give us a registration plate - T05893."

All the police recognise the background of where the car is as well: "It's on the road to the fireworks factory."

Anam nods: "There are three other surveillance cameras on that road. All were damaged." This is an old camera installed many years ago. It's hidden behind a tree, in a secluded location. But because of its age and location, the images are quite blurry. It took me a while to sharpen the image.'

"I have checked out the car." He continues: "It belongs to a local car rental company. The person who booked it used a false name to register, and he never showed his face to the staff."

Bo JinYan looks at Jian yao. He seems to have thought of something. Jian yao seems to understand what his train of thought....

One of the old officers says: "Perhaps Li Xun Ran lured the criminal to the factory. The fireworks factory, old train station... During the "Killer Machine" case, Li Xun Ran was in charged of recording the locations of all the surveillance cameras. He knows where every camera is..."

Everyone is quiet. Jian yao's heart is still aching. She sits down quietly.

He is in the hands of a cunning criminal. His life is in danger. And he is trying his best to leave clues for them.

Bo JinYan turns to ask Anam: "Where is the car now?" He says calmly. He seems to be sure that Anam has found the location of this car.

And Anam doesn't disappoint him. He gives his first smile since Jian yao and the others have met him. When he smiles, two adorable dimples appear on each cheek.

He shows the next image.

It's the entry to a highway. It's late at night. There are not a lot of cars in the picture. And it is dark, they can't see who the driver is. But the signboards are bright. They can clearly read it's the highway that leads to the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal. The route to get to Hong Kong.

Everyone is stunned. If 'he' has thrown down his challenge to war, why is he going to Hong Kong?

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Fifteen days later.

Crescent City, California. USA. Pelican Bay Prison.

At twilight, the fields and forest look like they are covered by a grey veil. The prison are dotted with guards patrolling the prison that holds some of the most notorious criminals in the US.

Jyao and BJY are standing on the lawn outside the prison. There are a few representatives from the Chinese embassy and the FBI with them - they are waiting to see Tommy.

Since 'he' 'disappeared' to Hong Kong, it's even harder to track him. Two weeks has passed. Little progress has been made.

It is likely 'he' will commit a crime anytime. It's like time bomb waiting to explode.

The night winds are brisk and cold. Jian yao zips up her jacket. Bo JinYan has a long black trench coat. He looks at her: "Wait outside when I talk to Tommy."

Jian yao nods: "Be careful."

The guard opens the gate for Bo JinYan.

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A room without window. Thin concrete walls. A metallic yellow door with a series of complex locks on it.

Jian Yao and others stands inside the room next to this cell. There is a one way glass so they can observe the interactions between Bo JinYan and Tommy.

Bo JinYan is sitting alone under a blazing white light. He looks calm and collected. Two guards are standing at the door.

Then slowly, a young white man in yellow prison uniform shows up.

He is not how Jian yao has expected. He looks more 'gentle' and cleanly shaven than that in the pictures in Bo JinYan's files at home.

But when you look into his eyes, your heart will be startled.

Those blue eyes, is the colour of a still blue lake. There is a smile on his face, like he doesn't care about anything in the world. His gaze is completely cold. It's a pair of eyes that belong to a serial killer.

Tommy sits opposite Bo JinYan. The guards leave and close the door behind them. Only Bo JinYan and Tommy are left in the room.

Bo JinYan looks at him: "Hi."

Tommy shows a smile: "Hi."

The two of them then keeps quiet. Bo JinYan don't seem to be in a hurry to ask him any questions.

"You are different." Tommy says to him.

Bo JinYan looks at him. He remains quiet.

Tommy laughs: "There's a scent of a woman on you."

On the other side of the glass, Jian yao's heart tightens. Then she hears Tommy says: "I want to see her. If she shows up, I will tell you the identity of the person you are looking for."

(Extra story - His voice 1)

In the two weeks that Li Xun Ran was missing, Jian yao found it hard to sleep sometimes. She would toss and turn all night, thinking about her good friend. When her fidgety woke him up, he looked gently at her frowned brows. He wished there were something that he could do to make her feel better.

One night, Jian yao was half asleep when she heard some voice. It sounded like someone singing. It's a popular song. She was not fully conscious, and she can't really remember what's the name of the song,

even though it does sound very familiar. But she also thought the tune sounded funny. It's like every note was sung wrong. She subconsciously wanted to tell the person that his singing was off, and that it's almost painful to listen to his singing....

The next morning, when Jian yao woke up, Bo JinYan was already out of bed and changed. He was in his white shirt and trousers, looking smart standing beside the bed. He smiled at her: "Did you sleep well last night?"

Jian yao sat on bed, and shook her head: "No. I dreamt of the Flower Cannibal."

Bo JinYan is startled. He looked concerned. Then Jian yao continued: "I dreamt that he was singing in my ears."

Bo JinYan has no expressions on his face: "Oh, how was it?"
Jian yao looked like there's still lingering fear in her: "To use the term you say all the time - it was a disaster."

Bo JinYan kept quiet for a while. Then with a slightly blushed face, he started to walk out of the room. Jian yao heard his voice coming from the corridor: "I assure you. You will never hear him sing again."

Chapter 63

On the flight to US, Jian Yao asked Bo JinYan: "How would you describe Tommy?"

Bo JinYan answers: "Cunning, cruel, crazy, craves for blood and death, and he uses lots of tricks and method to accomplish his sick desires."

Jian Yao thought about what he said: "So... Flower Cannibal no.1 is like an oracle on the philosophy of killing, and Tommy is the expert on the art of killing?"

Bo JinYan gave her a glance, and said faintly: "Why do you make them sound so civilised? One is a lunatic with delusional disorder. The other, a lunatic that runs around like a mad dog."

Under the blazing white light, a neatly dressed Bo JinYan sits on one end of the table. Opposite him, Tommy is sitting quietly with cuffs on both his hands and his feet.

After Tommy's request, everyone turns to look at Jian Yao. Jian Yao just stands quietly. She is looking at Bo JinYan. Others in the room are surprised at how calm she is. After all, it's a request from a notorious monster. But the reason is simple. Jian Yao trusts Bo JinYan. She knows he will make the right decision.

Besides, if she has to face Tommy, so what?

After thinking about his request for a while, Bo JinYan pushes his chair back and stands up. He straightens his suit. He has an answer for him.

"Nice meeting you again. Goodbye."

He takes the files on the table, walks out without looking back at Tommy again. There is no hesitation in his steps.

On this side of the glass, everyone is quiet.

Tommy keeps looking at the wall in front, as if he is oblivious to Bo JinYan leaving.

“Ding.” The metal door opens. The guard comes in: “You have finished?”

Bo JinYan: “Yes, thanks.” He walks out briskly.

“Ok. Ok.”

At the last moment, Tommy gives in: “Simon, you are so boring. Can’t you even take a joke?”

Bo JinYan turns sideways to look at him: “Don’t challenge my patience. Did you forget you were never successful at that?”

Tommy keeps smiling. But he looks displeased.

Jian Yao’s heart is like a string that just got plucked.

In those six months, what sort of games were Bo JinYan, Tommy and ‘him’ playing?

Bo JinYan throws Tommy the files. Then he sits back leisurely in his chair.

The room with Jian Yao and the rest of the officers.

One of the FBI agents says: “Obviously Tommy is eager to know what’s no.1 has done recently. Bo JinYan knows him well.”

Jian Yao smiles. Well, don’t play any mind games with Bo JinYan, because he will always win.

Bo JinYan passes the information on the ‘killer machine’ case to Tommy.

“Rough.” He criticises.

Bo JinYan nods: “Yes, that’s true.”

Then Tommy's eyes are fixed on the photos with the codes written in blood.

Bo JinYan observes his expression. He asks: "Have you come across this encoding method before?"

Tommy smiles. He is still looking at the photos: "He likes to play number games. And he likes variety. I don't remember."

His answer is vague. Bo JinYan explains: "The answer is a group of numbers.... and this next group is the sum of the number when multiple them by itself...the difference between the numbers when you divide them by itself... " He shows Tommy the method used to work out the final set of numbers. "...and convert these numbers to their corresponding alphabet according to their order from A to Z... so, the message is "Hi, Simon." "

Tommy smiles: "Oh. Such a simple but perfect method."

Bo JinYan asks Tommy: "Why does he use squares and square roots within his calculations. Is there a special reason for that?"

On the other side of the glass, Jian Yao is amazed. She never thought it would be of any significance.

Tommy looks at Bo JinYanY with his blue eyes. When he wants to, he can look warm and gentle. Just by his looks alone, you would never have guessed he is such a monster. "He likes the concept of 'square', because it represents him and me. Simon, it's the two of us, saying Hello to you."

Then Bo JinYan shows Tommy the second file. It's the murder case at Yin Ziqi's company. This time, it's a projection on the wall. A short phrase 'written' in English: "I miss you so much, buddy."

And the last messages are from the arsonist case: "Say Hello to Jenny." and "Now it begins."

Tommy maintains the same smile on his face. He looks up: "What do you want to know?"

"What can you tell me?"

Tommy's hand reaches under the table to press the button to call the guards. Then he stands up.

"I can tell you this - His aim is to kill you, to avenge me."

Bo JinYan is quiet. All the others are stunned, including Jian Yao.

The guards open the door. Tommy reaches his hands out to them. He turns to smile to Bo JinYan: "Thank you for showing me the messages. As a token of my appreciation, I will give you a hint. He and I, we like to hunt the strongest prey. This is his favourite trick - to wear you down slowly, to provoke you. Then when you are in his hands, he will devour you. Good luck, Simon. I can't wait to see you getting into one of those big black plastic bags for corpse."

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A new moon hangs in the horizon. They are walking along the waterfront in a wharf. It's twilight. The city lights starts to sparkle and reflects on the waves before crashing the pier.

There is another eight hours before the flight leaves for Hong Kong. After leaving the prison, Bo JinYan and Jian Yao walk along the road together. This city is new to Jian Yao, but it's a familiar place to Bo JinYan. He brings her to the wharf, and look out to the yachts and boats on the water.

Jian Yao holds on to his sleeves: "There's not a lot of people here. We need to be careful."

Bo JinYan looks at her, then at the beautiful scenery. He smiles: "What are you afraid of? No.1 is in Hong Kong."

Tommy's words are still ringing in her head. But she is distracted by Bo JinYan as he grabs her hand and walk towards a yacht.

A white yacht is leaving the harbour. Bo JinYan takes off his suit jacket. He is steering the boat. Jian Yao stands behind him. She sees his broad shoulders and back, and a sense of comfort fills her.

This is beautiful. The shimmering stars in the sky. The sparkling waves in the sea. They can feel a cool breeze on their face. Bo JinYan has a glass of red wine in one hand. He doesn't seem concerned about the current situation at all. Jian Yao, on the other hand, is not so relaxed: "Does No.1 want to kill you?" She asks.

"No. He doesn't want to kill me." He turns around to look at her: "You believed Tommy? I knew he was lying right from the start."

Jian Yao is shocked.

BJY stops the yacht in a sheltered bay. He sits down next to her. His masculine scent mixed with the salty air wafts to her nostrils.

"What was his first sentence?" He asks.

Jian Yao replies: "If you allow me to meet her, he will tell you the identity of No.1."

"No.1 is his spiritual mentor and support, he will never betray him." Bo JinYan says: "He only said that to entice me."

Jian Yao nods: "You said that No.1's status is higher than Tommy. He won't consider Tommy as his equal."

"Yes." Bo JinYan agrees: "After he saw the messages left by No.1, he was not pleased. It's obviously not what he expected. As for his final words...." Bo JinYan gives a small smile: "If he didn't really care, based on his cunning personality, he would make up another lie and try to trap me again. But he decided to leave almost immediately. Even though he was trying to cover his emotions, I knew he was most upset."

Jian Yao is puzzled: "You mean... he thinks that No.1's goal is to make you his new partner?"

Bo JinYan nods.

More than anyone in the world, Tommy understands No.1.

"No.1 wants to defeat you, break you then control you?" Jian Yao asks.

Bo JinYan is right. No.1 is a lunatic with delusional disorder. He will not get his wish. Bo JinYan is much stronger than he thinks.

But Bo JinYan didn't reply Jian Yao straight away. He looks out to the sea for a while, then answers in a slight mockery tone: "Of course he won't succeed."

Jian Yao does not feel any more relaxed than before this discussion. They are dealing with a madman. A psychopath who wants to make the most famous criminal psychologist in the world his partner.

She turns to him. He is still looking out to the sea. She doesn't know what's in his mind. Eventually, he realises she is staring at him.

"I just remembered, it's been a long time since our last kiss."

Their tongues tangle. Soon Jian Yao is sitting on his knees. Bo JinYan wraps his hand around her waist with one hand. The other supports her head so that he can kiss her more deeply. The cool brisk evening is turning into a steamy hot night. Bo JinYan carries her and walks to the bedroom cabin...

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When they get back to the pier, Bo JinYan looks calm and cool again, but with a smile on his face. Jian Yao's face is still blushing. They walk off the yachts with their arms around each other.

Why does she feel like a little kid who just stole some candy?

She treasures every moment she spends with him.

When the two of them meet up with the other representatives from China, one of them tells them: "He has begun. Something very serious has happened in Hong Kong. No.1 sent us acruel and perverted video. "

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Two days later. In the Hong Kong Police Criminal Unit. Conference room.

Beside a rectangular table, the team that consists of elite officers from China and Hong Kong are sitting down in rows. Behind the closed curtain and dimmed lights, a projector is hooked up to Anam's laptop. They are about to see a video sent to them by No.1. It was delivered in an envelope with a USB inside. Of course there's no signs of any fingerprints or clues that they can use to track where did the envelope came come. .

Bo JinYan and Jian Yao is sitting in the front row, listening intently to what's been shared so far.

The video begins.

A black screen. There's some background noise. It's not very loud. It sounds like a woman's crying, mixed with footsteps.

Suddenly, it's bright. Someone has turned on the lights. It's a prison cell.

In the small space of around 10 metres square, there is a woman. Her hands and feet are tied with a long chain. She is sitting in bed. There is a toilet seat next to the bed. When she saw the lights turned on, she looks frightened and desperate: "Please... No!... Please let me go... Don't hit me anymore!"

The room is quiet. Jian Yao feels the chills are running down her spines.

The girl is in her 20s. There are lots of wounds on her body. Her clothes are torn, like rags hanging on her. Except for her face, everywhere is filled with bruised marks caused by whipping. There are several open wounds as well, some of which looks horrible.

She is curling to the corner of the bed. There is nowhere to hide in this small cell. Then, a whip appears in the video. The whipping begins again. It lasted for about 10 minutes. By the end of it, the girl is whining like a small animal, shaking uncontrollably on the floor.

The screen goes dark again.

A few seconds later, another image appears.

The second cell.

This time, there's an old man in the room. He is over 60 years old. His hands and feet are also in chains. There are no marks of physical abuse on him.

But he looks scared. He is looking around the cell. This is because there is a speaker on in a corner of ceiling. And the sound coming out from the speaker is the sound from the woman's cell.

The old man's eyes look empty and spaced out. He is covering his ears with his hands and yelling loudly: "Who are you? Let me go! Do you want money? You can take all my money."

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The third room. The lighting is different in this room. It's dark red. It's probably shot through night vision camera. The images are not very clear.

Here, a man is tied up onto a bed. He is struggling to break himself. But he is not successful. There is a piece of masking tape over his mouth. Then, a man with medical white robe walks in, wearing a cap, a face mask and night vision goggles.

That's him. Jian Yao thought to herself.

She never expects that it would be under such circumstances that she 'sees' him for the first time. He is holding a scalpel and a towel. He walks over to the bed. Then he cut off a small piece of flesh from the man's left arm. The man whimpers like a wounded animal. He holds the piece of flesh in his hand. It's around the size of an egg. He throws it into the air, then catches it. He walks out of the room.

The fourth room. Jian Yao's heart is aching.

There's a boy in this room. He is approximately seven years old. He is a good looking boy, but he looks extremely pale at the moment. He is still wearing his primary school uniform, curled up in a corner of the bed. He is in fear because there's something else in the room besides him. A dog. A black dog that seems to have starved for a long

time. The dog is almost half the height of a man. Patches of its fur is missing, and there's also wounds on its body.

Then a man's hand appears on the bottom of the screen. It pushes a tray with some raw meat through the bars into this cell.

Both the child and the dog are staring at the food. The dog pounces towards the tray. The boy looks scared, but he closes his eye and jumps out of the bed to grab the meat. He gets it before the dog. The dog bites his leg...

Four scenes of physical and mental torture.

Anam pauses the video.

Everyone is disgusted. Jian Yao takes a look at Bo JinYan. He has no expression on his face.

One of the officers from the Hong Kong Police Force explains: "The identity of the four victims has been identified. It's inside the report in front of you..."

Hwa Tiao. Female. 25 years old. She lives in Sai Kung. She is a sales assistant. She has been missing for 5 days. Last seen on her way home from work.

Zhou Lin Po. Male, 64 years old. He lives in Aberdeen. A retired government employee. He has been missing for 6 days. Last seen on the way to visit his family.

Yang Yu Zhe. Male. 29 years old. He lives in Lamma Island. He is an architect. Disappeared four days ago. He was trekking at the time.

Li Kai Xuan. 8 years old. He lives in Tuen Mun. He is a student. He has been missing for seven days. Last seen on his way home after school.

Four very different victims. At this stage, there seems to be no connection between them.

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Anam continues to play the video.

The screen is split into four boxes, with one image in each box. This is actually the end of the video. Just four still frames.

The top left frame shows a woman lying on the floor, motionless. Her skin has been peeled off from her body.

The top right frame shows the old man lying on the floor. His throat is slit. He is lying in a big pool of blood. It looks like all his blood has been drained.

The bottom left frame shows a man lying on a metal bed. His body is full of holes where flesh has been scooped out. The largest hole is on his left chest. His heart has been ripped out.

The last frame shows a boy also lying on bed. His hands are chopped off.

Four very different deaths.

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Then a voice that's been processed to sound mechanical and coarse coming from the video:

"Hi Simon. I am here."

Everyone turns to look at Bo JinYan. Jian Yao's feels like a rock has just fallen onto her heart.

Then 'he' declares war.

"Simon. it's your turn now. Profile me."

Extra story (His voice 2)

The truth is, Bo JinYan only ever sang in public once before he met Jian Yao.

But for some things, once is more than enough.

It's the graduation day for his doctorate degree. His pro-Asian culture professor has invited his pet student and some others to a karaoke bar. Bo JinYan does not like to attend social functions. But this is an invitation from a professor he highly respects. He can't decline.

After everyone else has had a turn, they ask Bo JinYan, who has been sitting by himself and drinking sake at the back of the room, to choose a song.

"Yes, come on. Simon, sings us a song."

"We have never heard Simon sings."

Bo JinYan sweeps them a look: "I am not interested." He turns to the professor: "Can I leave now?"

The professor is half drunk. He says, with his face blushing from the alcohol: "No, this is my party. Everyone has to sing. This is your last task for the night. Simon, don't tell me you are tone deaf."

Bo JinYan smiles mockingly: "How can that be true?"

That means he's agreed. Everyone is so excited. They eagerly wait for the handsome star of their faculty to perform.

Bo JinYan walks up to the microphones. He chose the hit song at the time - You are beautiful. It's not because he particularly likes this song. But it's so popular and catchy that even he remembers the tune.

As for whether he could sing... well, Bo JinYan thinks there's nothing wrong with his singing. Reason? How can a genius like him not able to master such a simple skill?

The music starts...

His lips starts to move...

"My brilliant life.."

Everyone dropped their jaw at the first line of the lyrics.

He is.... he is.... totally out of tune!

Bo JinYan can tell from the reactions of his peers that something is wrong. But he is confident he can fix it...

His voice, which is usually deep and magnetic, is now a torture to all who are present.

Gradually, more and more people are laughing out loud. Then at the end of the song, Bo JinYan throws down the microphone and leaves without saying goodbye.

The next day, a text is spreading at lightning speed around the campus.

Girls, do you believe that perfect guys exist?

Of course not.

The winner for the hottest and most perfect Asian man - Simon Bo... yes, that's him. If you would like to date him, we suggest you click on this internet link first: xxxxx - Simon's solo.

PS. Consensus amongst those who were present on the night - It's a total disaster.

PPS. You are most welcomed to forward this message to your friends.

Chapter 64

When Li Xunran wakes up, he sees a glaring white light. He is lying on a shabby little bed. His body is covered with cuts and wounds. His hands and feet bounded by long heavy chains.

He coughs. His congested chest seems to clear a little. Slowly, he sits up and gets out of bed. He walks over to the sink at the corner of the room. He turns the tap on and drinks some water.

He hears the sound of a plate being pushed through a little opening on the bottom of the metal door. It's a plate of hot roast duck and rice.

Li Xunran has lost weight. He hasn't shaved for days. But his eyes still looks sharp. He looks at the food, then walks back to bed.

"Well..." Comes a man's voice from behind the metal door: "You are foolish to starve yourself. If you have no energy, where will you get the strength to fight me?"

The voice has been processed. It sounds sharp and creepy.

Li Xunran ignores him. He closes his eyes. After a while, he opens his eyes and asks: "Where are the four people that were locked up in the other cells?"

He voice is very coarse.

The man laughs: "Oh, I have sent them home."

Li Xunran remains quiet.

The man says: "There's no hurry. You will get four new neighbours in a few days. Now, have some food, or else you won't have the energy to counsel them like you did for the other four people. Huh.. you are a good policeman."

Li Xunran refuses to engage with him.

After a while, the man seems to have lost his patience.

"Why are you so stubborn?" He yells at him: "Can you just relax and have some fun? ... Thanks to you. I am stuck in Hong Kong. If you didn't tip the police off, I wouldn't be here. I hate Hong Kong."

Then the plate of roast duck and rice is pulled out of the cell. Li Xunran hears noise of shattering glass. He threw the plate of rice on the plate. Then he walks away.

"Click." The light is turned off. The room is pitched dark.

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The sunshine is like a gold dust that is sprinkled onto this cosmopolitan city. It's hard to connect the gruesome murders with this beautiful and sophisticated city,

Jian Yao stands in front of her window in the hotel room. Not far behind her, Bo Jinyan is taking a shower in the bathroom.

They have been very busy since they arrived Hong Kong. After watching the video, the special team made up of elite officers from

Chinese Public Security and the Hong Kong Police Force continues with their investigation and gathers evidence about the victims. Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao are taking a short break in their hotel.

The sound of the water stops. Bo Jinyan walks out from the bathroom. He sits down on bed. He is drying his hair with a towel. Jian Yao walks over and stands in front of him.

Bo Jinyan looks at her: "Do you want me?" He touches her cheeks with his hand: "Baby, I am sorry. I am not in the mood right now. I promise I will make it up to you once we solve this case."

Jian Yao quickly clarifies: "Of course not!"

When they left the police station, nearly everyone was looking at Bo Jinyan . The team leader quietly said to her: "This is not his fault. Please make sure he understands. And that he doesn't put unnecessary pressure on himself."

She takes his towel from him and dries his hair for him: "I wanted to tell you... don't put too much pressure on yourself."

He reaches out and wraps his hand around her waist: "Why would I put pressure on myself?"

Jian Yao replies: "No.1 declared war on you in front of everyone." Actually, everyone feels the pressure. They know they face a strong enemy. Everyone is a little tense.

"Of course he would say that to me, who else in this world would be able to catch him?"

Jian Yao realises.... once again, she has underestimated Bo Jinyan .

His self-confidence and arrogance, is as concrete as a rock. 'Pressure' is what normal people would have, not Bo Jinyan .

He never even consider that he might loose.

Bo Jinyan leans over and pecks her lips: "I am taking a nap." He lies down and covers himself with the duvet.

Jian Yao is a little surprised: "We are not going back to the station?"
Bo Jinyan smiles: "What's the hurry? We can't do much at the moment. Besides, I have to make sure I am in my top form."

He grabs the sleep mask on the bedside table. Jian Yao looks at him. Actually, he hadn't had a good sleep for days.

"Ok then. I'll take a shower now." She says. Then she hears him say: "Call the restaurant and reserve a table. Order some seafood and fish. I'll need a good meal when I wake up."

She can feel it. He is going all out for it.

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Sunset.

Jian Yao wakes up.

Bo Jinyan is not beside her. He is changed into his suit. He's combed his hair back. He stands in front of the mirror. He is ready.

Jian Yao gets out of bed and hugs him from behind. She rests her head on his back: "What do you want me to do?"
He pauses, then he says: "Wear something pretty."

Jian Yao is stunned: "Why?"

He turns sideways to look at her: "I need to be in top form. And according to past experiences, every time you dress nicely, I feel pleased, and it helps me to perform better."

He is serious. Jian Yao can't help but laugh: "Sure."

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In the evening. Inside the conference room of the police station.

Everyone in the team is there. They start with a quick update:

First, they have found the bodies. It's dumped in four different rural locations. From each body, he took away something as a souvenir.

A piece of skin from the back is missing from the woman. He cut off some hair from the old man. The heart of the man is missing. As for the young boy, he took his pair of hands.

Jian Yao writes down the items on a whiteboard: Skin. Hair. Heart. Hands

Anam managed to make a discovery too. Even though the roads to where the bodies were dumped are in remote areas, he managed to find some surveillance camera images and eye witness that proves that the same Black Honda 7 seaters has passed by.

However, the registration plate is, as they have expected, a fake number. None of the images managed to capture the driver's face. This model of car is popular in Hong Kong. It will be very hard to find the vehicle with the information they have.

One of the officers from Hong Kong says: "We've asked the family members and friends of the four victims. They don't know one another. No.1's seems to choose his victims randomly. Besides that, we also found out the female victim attends night school classes, and that

the architect is an amateur writer who has won a few awards. But we are not sure if they are relevant to the case.”

Another senior investigator shares his views: ‘I think his choice of victims is not completely random. We found surveillance camera images and eye witness accounts that shows that the same black vehicle were spotted multiple times in the areas where the victims went missing for a few days before the disappearance. The female victim and the child travel on the same route every day. As for the male victim and the old man, it’s just by chance that they were in the area where they went missing.”

Jian Yao summaries: “So, two abductions are pre-planned, and the other two are spontaneous.”

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The meeting is finished. The officers have been running around all day. Some of them are going for a bite. Others are going home to sleep.

But for Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao, their work has just begun.

They list the facts In front of them:

Woman, old man, man, child

Torture method: Whipping, mental stress, flesh cutting and animal bites

Cause of death: Poison, slit the throat, removing the heart, poison

Souvenir: skin, hair, heart, hands

Abduction: both preplan and spontaneous

Anam and a few other young officers from Hong Kong are still in the conference room. One of them comments: “I think he is deliberately

using different methods to confuse us, so that we cannot establish any patterns.”

Another officer suggests: “Is it a hint that he has multiple personality disorder?”

Multiple personality disorder is something that occurs frequently in movies. But in real life situation, it’s actually very rare.

Then Anam speaks: “Four people. Three possible groupings:

From the torture angle: the man and the woman suffered the most physical abuse.

From the angle of how they died: He chose a cruel way to kill the two men. The woman and child were poisoned before their bodies were mutilated.

From the angle of abduction: it’s pre-planned for the woman and child only.”

Bo Jinyan asks him: “So, what’s your conclusion?”

Anam shakes his head: “I don’t have one. I am just summarising the facts.”

Jian Yao asks Bo Jinyan : “So what are your thoughts?”

There’s hardly any trend or pattern in the four deaths. She doesn’t even know where to start.

Bo Jinyan seems to be able to read her mind: “You think it’s too complicated?”

Jian Yao nods.

“Then remember this. No matter how complicated a case seems, it still follows the same principle.”

Everyone in the room looks at each other. They wait for Bo Jinyan to explain.

Bo Jinyan continues: “He is a psychopath. No matter how much he tries to complicate things, he will reveal his desires and real feeling through his killings. It’s not something he can hide. He is very egotistic. He naively thinks he can tame me to be his partner. What do you think he is trying to show me?”

Jian Yao has some thoughts, but they are random thoughts that needs time to be organised and sorted out. But before she is able to work it out, Bo Jinyan reveals the answer.

“He is trying to show me his life.”

Chapter 65

“He is trying to show me his life.”

Bo Jinyan is standing under the light. Tall body, highly handsome face, superior intellect... he always manages to stand out in the crowd.

What Bo Jinyan said is like a laser beam that cuts through the darkness. Suddenly there’s a place to start. Everyone looks at the white board again. The words seem to become more meaningful now. They try to link the thoughts together.

But Bo Jinyan can’t wait for them to catch up. He puts the white board marker in the table, then he starts to speak:

“Whipping, is the most direct and powerful way to convey anger and hatred. It’s more intense than cutting flesh or slow torture such as draining the blood. Therefore, he hates woman.

And usually, the cause of hatred for women stems from the lack of maternity love. Men who grow up in a healthy and normal childhood usually remains psychologically stable even though they are treated badly in their teenage years or adulthood by other woman. Therefore, it’s most likely that his mother abandoned or left him when he was young.

Skinning is a complicated and tedious process. But he managed to complete the task almost to perfection. It’s not the first time he had done that. You should investigate all the skinning cases in the US in the past ten years. There might be some clues there.

Skinning suggests plunder and pillage. Even though there’s no sex involved, it’s a type of punishment. Perhaps it’s linked to his lack of maternity love during his childhood. But there is also a possibility that he was sexually abused by an older woman in his teenage years.”

The room is quiet after Bo Jinyan stops. Jian Yao thinks about what he says. Most psychopaths in the US had a rough childhood. No.1 might come from a rich family, but psychological damage can happen regardless of background.

Bo Jinyan continues: “He dismembered the man’s body, and he removed his heart. This is also a sign of depredation. He wants to take away his self-worth and pride. The man suffered a lot of injuries when he was alive.

Almost all psychopaths form their fantasies during their teenage years. This man probably represents his father. He and his father did not have a close relationship. I think his father may have abused him, either physically or mentally when he was growing up, but over a long period of time. He has no respect for his father’s character or values.

Emotionally, what he did to the man requires more patience than what he did to the woman. Just like the hatred he has for his father is accumulated over a long period of time. ”

Jian Yao starts to understand the difference between the methods he used for torture. They are all cruel. But one method requires more patience than the other, and it's closely tied with his emotions and how he wishes to express his angers.

This is the most reasonable explanation of why he used so many different ways to kill. He carries different types of angers from his life experiences. So, this is how he is 'showing his life' to Bo Jinyan.

“The old man signifies death. He didn't suffer any physical abuse. This is out of character for him. Perhaps, the fact that no one can escape death, is a natural fear that he has to live with. But he slit the old man's throat to signify that he has the power to control life and death.... at least, for other people.

The child and the dog signify his perilous childhood. It was full of suffering and pain. The child died of poisoning. It is a peaceful way of killing his victim. After the child died, he chopped off his hands. The symbolism of this is that he is taking away hope.”

Bo Jinyan starts to summarise and profile:

“Based on these findings, we have a picture of him:

1. He is between 25 to 35 years old. American Chinese. He has lived in the US for a long time. He is between 180 to 185 cm tall. Not thin or fat. He has a good command of both English and Chinese language.
1. He is wealthy. He puts in a large amount of time, effort and money towards his crime. He doesn't have to work. His money is inherited.

1. His mother abandoned him when he was young, and that scarred his life. He was also abused by his father and other older female member(s) in the family.
1. Strong anti-society sentiments. He is also very temperamental.
1. Extremely intelligent, and very egotistic. He might be paranoid and have delusions about things. But currently, it's not too serious. It has not evolved into illness yet. He is still sober and fully conscious of everything he is doing. Based on his family background and his abilities, he studied in one of the top universities in the US. However, he didn't have friends and he couldn't integrate into the community. There is a strong possibility that he dropped out before completing his degree.
2. His knowledge on criminal psychology and mind control is beyond most amateurs. I believe he studied the subject in university.
1. He has accumulated a lot of crime experience. His first crime was committed when he is a young adult. I will contact the US Police for information on skinning cases in the past decade.

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It's late at night. But there is still much work to be done.

After Bo Jinyan's briefing, all of the officers look impressed. Anam walks up to him. He adjusts his glasses and says: "That's incredible. Well done." Then he walks out of the conference room. He needs to get some rest too.

Everyone is gone. There are only two people left in the conference room.

Jian Yao is busy typing what he just shared with everyone onto the computer. When she is done, she turns the screen to Bo Jinyan: "Do you want to double check that I didn't miss out anything?"

Jian Yao is so proud of her man. The Flower Cannibal No.1 tried to mislead the team, but in front of Bo Jinyan, it's like child play.

Bo Jinyan stands in front of the white board. He frowns. Jian Yao glances at him.

- There's hesitation in him. Why is that?

He turns to Jian Yao, and gives a faint laugh: "No. If we follow this profile, we will not find him."

Jian Yao: "...why?"

Bo Jinyan leans back on his chair. His fingers tapping on the table.

"Hum.... it's too easy." He smiles mockingly. "This profile is a profile that he wants me to believe."

Jian Yao's heart misses a beat: "The profile is incorrect? It's a ploy to distract us?"

"No." Bo Jinyan clarifies: "The profile is real. Like I said, he is temperamental pervert. If he didn't tell me anything about himself, there's no fun for him. But he confident that we won't be able to find him based on these informations alone."

Jian Yao looks at the white board. Bo Jinyan points to a few of the points: "There are a lot of people that fit these basic points. We have seen his ability with hacking into computer systems. What if he changed his education records, for example, we would spend a lot of time and effort without finding him. And in the meantime, he is ready for his second crimewave."

"If I am just an arrogant professor, and rely on the profile he gave me, then I am going to lose this game." Bo Jinyan continues. "But I am more intelligent than that. He underestimated me."

Jian Yao smiles at his confidence.

"So.." she ask: "What should we do then?"

But then she doesn't expect Bo Jinyan's response.

He wipes everything off the white board. Then he takes one white board marker and gives another one to Jian Yao: "What's the hurry. If it's not the right path, let's start again."

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A lot of people are destined to have a sleepless night in Hong Kong. A mad man is on a killing spree, it's enough to make the whole city's police force jittery. But thousands of miles away, Yin Ziqi's mood and fate is also governed by development of this case.

She is wearing her nightgown, sitting in the study. She is reading the news on Lin Yi Yang's case. Ever since his disappearance, she has not smiled. They have been together for many years. Besides, he has a direct impact on her life, and the future of her company. After all, it's also an arranged marriage based on commercial reasons.

However, there's not much news on the case. Police force from both Hong Kong and China are very careful not to leak any information to the media. There's no indication as to the whereabouts of her fiancé, and whether he is alive, or dead.

Her mobile phone rings. She checks the caller display. It's Lin Yi Yang's mother, the wife of the chairman of Lin's Corporation.

She hesitates, then decides to answer the call: "Hello, Auntie."

Mrs.Lin sounds anxious: "Ziqi, do you have any news on your side?"

"Sorry, not yet."

Mrs.Lin pauses for a while, then she says with a low and slightly coarse voice: "I have news."

Lin's Corporations is bigger than Yin's Corporations. They have more connections and influence.

Mrs. Lin speaks with a low voice: "This is confidential. The police says Yi Yang is brought to Hong Kong. He is still alive, but they don't know where he is."

Yin Ziqi is relieved to hear that he is alive: "Thank God he is alive. But..."

"Ziqi. Yi Yang's father has had a heart attack. I know your brother is leading this investigation. Can you please go to Hong Kong, and do everything you can to save him. When Yi Yang's father is better, we will come and join you."

"Sure. I will be there tomorrow." Yin Ziqi replies. "Nothing to will happen to Yi Yang."

After she hangs up, Mrs Lin gives a sigh. She is sitting on a luxurious and expensive sofa, her eyes are filled with tears.

Suddenly, her phone rings. She picks it up. She says with a trembling voice: "Yi Yang! Yi Yang!"

On the other end, comes the familiar of voice of his son: "Mom, is Ziqi coming?"

"Yes, she will be in Hong Kong tomorrow." Mrs.Lin asks anxiously:
"What's happening? I know you have nothing to do with those cases. But why are you not contacting the police? Does he want money? How much does he want?"

"Mom.... just don't call the police... goodbye."

Dawn.

When Jian Yao wakes up, Bo Jinyan is not in bed anymore.

She looks around. Bo Jinyan is nowhere to be seen. His briefcase and trench coat are still on the sofa. Where can he be?

Suddenly, she is scared. She quickly gives him a call on his mobile phone.

A familiar voice answers after just one ring: "What is it?"

Jian Yao relaxes: "Where are you?"

Early morning. The roof top of the hotel. The wind is quite strong today, and Jian Yao feels a little shaky while walking on the concrete floor. She wraps her hands around her shoulders to walk towards Bo Jinyan. She smiles when she sees him.

There is a helicopter pad on the roof top. A large yellow circle is drawn on the ground. A man with a white shirt has his back to her. That's her Bo Jinyan.

"Hey." She calls him softly.

"Yeah." He replies without even looking up.

The roof looks out the stunning views of Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong. But he is not there for the scenery. He has a piece of chalk on his hand. On the floor, it's filled with numbers, words, symbols.... and a few cartoon drawings of Chen Mo.

That's so cute. But if the hotel staff sees this, they might not be so amused.

Jian Yao sits down next to him. She asks: "Why did you come up here?"

"It's quiet here." He answers "It helps me to concentrate and think."

"Did you stay awake the whole night?"

He gives her a disapproving glance: "Do you think it would take me a whole night to work this out?"

Jian Yao laughs.

He seems a little more relaxed than when he said they have to start from scratch last night.

"You made progress?" she asks.

"Of course." He smiles.

Jian Yao smiles too. Of course. She said to herself.

The wind is strong. Jian Yao is starting to shiver slightly. Bo Jinyan pulls her into his arms. They sit down together to watch the sunrise over the harbour.

“There are some contradictions in his behaviour. Of course, he is not aware of them himself. What a pathetic lunatic. He is within our reach now.”

Chapter 66

Roof top.

Bo Jinyan stands up. He reaches his hand out to help Jian Yao to stand on her feet. They look at the words on the ground together. Bo Jinyan looks proud of his handiwork.

Unfortunately, his scribbles and thoughts don't seem to make any sense to her. She needs a little explanation to the visual 'feast' that is in front of her.

But she is used to it. She leans on his chest and compliments him: “You are amazing!”

Bo Jinyan curls his lips into a smile.

“Now, can you explain it to me?”

“Ur.... of course.”

He starts to point out his new discoveries:

“The first point, and the most important one. For a serious psychopath, the part of his fantasies that is most important for him is not to look back at his past, or show his hatred or retaliation. It's how to express the desires that are hidden deep within his heart. For them, this is the most rewarding part of their crime.

But when No.1 is 'showing us his life', where did he hide this important element?"

Jian Yao thinks to herself. Sun Yung fantasied about being a killer machine. Zhang Cheng imagined he was killing US spies, both are a type of heroism.

What does No.1 desires in life?

Therefore, he confuses the police and Bo Jinyan with the different killing methods. The real him is hiding somewhere.

"Second point. He hates women. So the question is, why did he plunder the man's self-worth, but not the woman's?"

Jian Yao can't work this out.

Bo Jinyan continues: "The third point. When he was torturing the man, he used duct tape to cover his mouth. Why did he not let him speak?"

Jian Yao answers subconsciously: "Because he doesn't want to hear his voice?"

Bo Jinyan sweeps her a glance. He says faintly: "All his actions, even those he didn't consciously planned, has a reason. Why did he not want to hear the man's voice. I can't work this out at the moment."

Jian Yao is quietly thinking. Well, looks like there are still a lot of unanswered questions.

"The fourth point. Why did he take away the grey hair from the old man as a souvenir? If it's to symbolise his control over life and death, should it not be some other organs or blood? After all, that would definitely excite him more. But he took away hair."

Jian Yao answers without much thinking: "Grey hair represents time, vicissitudes of life."

Bo Jinyan looks at her with his bright eyes: "Correct." He says in his low voice. Jian Yao is pleased to receive a praise from him. She smiles sweetly: "Thank you."

"The last point. Why did he have to go through so much effort to dump the bodies in four different locations? Why not leave them in the same place? It would have saved him a lot of hassle."

Yes. These are good questions. Perhaps the answers will lead them into a new dimension. Once they are able to make sense of these points, they will be very close to the truth.

Bo Jinyan holds her hand and starts to walk to the lift.

"There must be some connection between the four victims. We need to find out what it is." He says, "So, our next job is -"

Jian Yao continues: "go back to first step - to analyse the victims."

Bo Jinyan stops and looks at her.

"What is it?" Jian Yao asks.

"Oh, nothing." He smiles. They continue to walk. Bo Jinyan is very pleased.

- Oh.. The words she spoke were exactly what Bo Jinyan was going to say. This is amazing. It has never happened before.

Sure enough. Nothing, not even the most difficult case, can stop them from deepening their relationship. They just love each other more as each day passes.

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The name of the detective from Hong Kong that is accompanying them to interview the victim's family is Ouyang Lin. Anam is with them too.

The four of them are in a car on their way to visit the female victim's friend. Ouyang Lin has his hands on the steering wheel. He is looking at the rear view mirror and says: "My men have done all that we can. The four victims are not connected. What do you expect to find?"

Even though he has his doubts, his tone is calm. It's a genuine question. He is not trying to mock them.

Bo Jinyan answers: "We are looking for different things to you." He stops there and looks at Jian Yao: "Tells him what we are looking for."

Jian Yao doesn't think twice. She says to them: "We are trying to find out what is No.1's fantasy."

Everyone in the car keeps quiet. Bo Jinyan has a smile on his face.

Oh.... perfect!

— — — — —

You Hua is a good friend, flatmate and colleague of the female victim. She is also in her early twenties.

You Hua's apartment is still cordoned off by the police. They walk into the apartment together. When Jian Yao enquires about her friend's character, You Hua's friend starts to cry: "She is the best girl I have ever met. She is gentle, smart and considerate. Everyone likes her. But why...."

Jian Yao reaches out and put her hand on You Hua's friend's shoulder to console her. Her friend continues: "Six months ago, she broke up with

her boyfriend. She was very sad. Other than that, I can't think of anything out of the ordinary."

Ouyang Lin says to Bo Jinyan and Anam: "We've checked out the boyfriend. He is in Australia when she was missing. He is not suspicious."

The friend picks up You Hua's family photo and passes it Jian Yao: "Her parents live in the countryside. They love her very much. Next month she is supposed to start a new position as a senior sales person in Lamma Island..."

Bo Jinyan takes a look at all the photos on the table. Colleagues, friends, family.... She has a lovely smile in all the photos. Looks like what You Hua said is true. She is an outgoing and friendly girl.

After they leave the apartment, the four of them heads back to their car. Ouyang Lin says: "This is the same information we obtained during our last visit. Professor Bo, do you have any new discoveries?"

"How do you think men rate You Hua?" ask Bo Jinyan.

Ouyang Lin replies: "A friendly girl that is quite approachable. I am sure she has a lot of admirers"

Anam replies: "Top 20% to 40% of women."

Everyone laughs. Now it's Jian Yao's turn: "It's comfortable to be with her. She is pleasant and nice. Is she the type of girl that No.1 is attracted to?"

They arrive at their second destination. It's the old man Zhou Lin Po's house. His daughter and daughter in law greets them.

Like You Hua, Zhou Lin Po is a good man. His daughter is pregnant. Her husband is holding onto her. She is in tears: "My dad always says: Live a life that is worthy. Don't hide your conscience. You can see for yourself what kind of person he is."

She shows them to the study. The room is full of trophies and medals.

1995 - 2002 - He's won several awards while working as a fireman
2002 - 2005 - As a primary school teacher, he's in the list of top 100 teachers in HK.

2005 - retirement - He works for the government and has received many awards for his diligence and hard work.

His daughter says: "Dad doesn't get paid a lot for his jobs. But he has helped many people. He sponsors two children in Guizhou province so that they can attend school..."

At this point, even Anam, who is usually very quiet, consoles the daughter, "Our condolences."

Ouyang Lin whispers into Bo Jinyan's ears: "We have verified all these. The other victims have not crossed path with him while he was working as a fireman, teacher or government staff."

Bo Jinyan nods and smiles.

Jian Yao knows this expression. It's a look that shows he has found a link.

..... so quickly?

Looks like he has some new ideas about the case already.

Chapter 67

Afternoon. In a Hong Kong style tea restaurant.

Hong Kong is known for being crowded. So little space, so many people. The tiny restaurant is packed with diners. It took a while before Ouyang Lin finds an empty table. He can't be bothered waiting for the waiters to come to get their orders. He and Anam walk up to the counter.

Jian Yao is sitting next to Bo Jinyan. She asks him quietly: "What have you discovered?"

Bo Jinyan smiles: "I still need to verify a few things."

Jian Yao nods.

After a while, the two men return. Ouyang Lin puts 2 plates of rice in front of them: "There's no grilled eel today. I ordered a barbecue roast pork and roast goose with rice for you. It's their most popular dish here."

Jian Yao looks down. Everyone is having the same food - roast pork and roast goose with rice.

Anam takes a pair of chopsticks and starts to eat. Ouyang Lin is hungry too. He starts before Jian Yao and Bo Jinyan.

Bo Jinyan frowns. Then he starts eating, but obviously, pushing the pork to one side. He is only eating the goose.

"Wait." said Jian Yao. She transfers the roast pork from his plate to hers, and gives him all her roast goose.

Bo Jinyan smiles at her: "Thanks."

During the whole exchange process, they never talked, as if they instinctively knew what's on each other's mind. Both Anam and Ouyang Lin are amazed.

Jian Yao explains to them: "Oh, he doesn't take roast pork." But of course, she didn't elaborate on the reason.

Ouyang Lin smiles. Anam continues with his meal.

Jian Yao's phone rings. It's her mother. She walks outside to take the call.

The three men are left at the table. Ouyang Lin thought he should start a topic of conversation since he is the host. He smiles to Bo Jinyan: "Professor, you are so lucky to have such a gentle and considerate girlfriend."

This is a new experience for Bo Jinyan. People usually speak to him out of respect. Even if it's out of envy, it's because of his high IQ. It's the first time it's on his success on finding the right woman.

Ha ha.... that's inevitable that other men are jealous of him.

He smiles, and then he looks at Ouyang Lin and says: "Thank you."

Ouyang Lin smiles back. Bo Jinyan looks at Anam, who kept quiet all these time. Anam doesn't think that it concerns him at all. But since, Bo Jinyan is looking at him, he pauses, then replies: "Top 15% - 30%. Not bad indeed."

They have been working together for some time now. They are getting more familiar with each other. Bo Jinyan just smiles: "Ah, a rookie that has never been in love."

Anam is puzzled: "What do you mean?"

Bo Jinyan has no patience to teach juniors. He just laughs in his heart.

What a stupid kid. He fails to understand one simple truth.

There's no ranking when it comes to love. She is his one and only
- No.1.

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The third person they are visiting is the male victim Yang Yu Zhe's apartment.

This young architect lived alone in a well-designed and classy apartment. His brother is there to meet them.

"Why did the pervert choose Yu Zhe?" The brother speaks with reddened eyes. He is aggrieved: "He gets on with everyone. He has a bright future in front of him..."

Jian Yao takes a look at the apartment. Like his brother said, he is an outstanding person. He's an award winning architect, working in a one of the best firms in town. The novel he wrote in his spare time has won many awards and is a best seller. Like Zhou Lin Po, his house is full of trophies and awards.

Bo Jinyan picks up his latest trophy. It has the words 'Winner of 2013 Hong Kong Galaxy Writing Competition engraved on it. His brother explains: "This is the highest achievement he has obtained so far. He was one of two people who got this award. It is very special. He was planning to give up his architectural career to become a full-time writer."

Bo Jinyan picks up a pile of letters. These are fan mails. Looks like his novel is very popular. His audience covers a large age group. Bo Jinyan looks at Ouyang Lim. Ouyang Lim nods and says: "We've checked out his fans. There's no one that is suspicious."

Jian Yao asks the brother: "Does he has a girlfriend?"

The brother shakes his head: "My brother spent all his time on work and his writing. Now that he's giving up his day job, he would have had more time to find a girl, and settle down. He was looking at buying his own apartment. But now..."

Everyone is silent.

The overall impression they got from Yang Yu Zhe's family and friends is that he is a high achiever with pleasant personality. He is not from a wealthy family. His parents died a few years ago from illness. But he and his brother have had a comfortable and good life.... until a few days ago.

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The last place to visit is their youngest victim - Li Kaixuan's house.

Well, to be correct, his uncle and auntie's house. His parents died in a car accident last year.

The child's death brought pain and grief to the family, but in a different way to the previous families. When Jian Yao and the others arrive, his uncle (father's elder brother) is manning his grocery shop. He looks tired. His aunt is looking after their two children.

"We feel sorry for Kaixuan." The auntie cries as she speaks: "But our work is busy and the shop opens for long hours. We are always exhausted. We know that he missed his parents, but he never said anything to us. He usually hid in the room when he came back from school. He was an obedient boy, and he did well at school. If his parents were still around, perhaps he wouldn't have met the killer, and he'll be alright..."

She is so overcome with emotions she can't continue. Jian Yao consoles her for a while, then she asks: "Can we have a look at his room please?"

“Yes, I’ll show you where it is.”

The Lee family house is not big. There is no extra room for Kaixuan, and the cousins didn’t want to live in the same room with him. so Kaixuan stays in the small loft.

Li Kaixuan is a mature boy for his age. The loft is neat and tidy. All the books are classified into genres and stacked neatly. He has lots of superhero comics like Superman & Spiderman. There are a lot of awards displayed on the wall: 2nd place in class, winner of writing competition, history knowledge contest winner etc etc

To everyone’s surprise, Bo Jinyan only took one look at the room. Then he walks to the entrance: “We can go now.”

The other three people are a little shocked. Jian Yao rushes up to him: “Why?”

Bo Jinyan looks at her: “I’ve seen what I needed to see. I have all the clues now.”

Jian Yao asks unbelievably: “You have worked out what his fantasy is?”

Bo Jinyan gives a confident smile. The others wait for him for an answer.

“Oh, I know everything.” He says: “His fantasy, his desires, and his next target...”

The others are amazed. He continues: “...and how we can find out his name, identity and what he looks like.”

Chapter 68

When Jian Yao is investigating a case with Bo Jinyan, she often feels like this -

She is still trapped in the fog on the bottom of the hill, but Bo Jinyan has arrived at the top, leisurely looking at the panoramic views of the surrounding mountains....

His “fantasy”, his next victim, his name and identity, his looks... How did Bo Jinyan get those answers?

“Simple.” He says as he rests his arm on the window sill of the backseat of the car: “The male victim is the person that is linked to the other three victims. Once you identify these links, you can work out what is his fantasy.”

It's 2pm. The sun is shining through the windows as Ouyang Lin drives everyone back to the police station. Both him and Anam is listening intently to Bo Jinyan's words.

So... the answer is hiding in the details. But there's so much detail. It's easy to overlook and hard to pick out ones that are important.

Bo Jinyan solves the puzzle for all of them:

“The female victim You Hua is a sales assistant who is about to take up a new role in Lamma Island. Yang Yu Zhe lives in Lamma Island. He is ready for a relationship, which means, if they didn't die, they would most probably meet each other. A beautiful outgoing single woman and a handsome but shy writer.... a perfect romance.”

Anam is bewildered: “Just because they might meet one another...No.1 decided to kill them?”

Bo Jinyan corrects him: “No. It's not ‘might’. Didn't No.1 arrange for the two of them to meet by capturing both of them?”

Everyone feels a chill down their spine.

“That’s sickening.” says Ouyang Lin.

Bo Jinyan continues: “Zhou Lin Po was a primary teacher between 2002-2005. So according to Yang Yu Zhe’s age, he would be at primary school at the time. No.1 wants a teacher like Zhou Lin Po. Someone that is like a father and a good mentor. Someone that is worthy of his respect.”

Li Kaixuan is a lonely, clever child who has lost his parents. Like Yang Yu Zhe, he likes writing - remember the awards he received for winning a writing competition? And those superhero comic books? If he were Yang Yu Zhe’s son, he would admire and adore Yang Yu Zhe, and probably follows after his footsteps to become a writer when he grows up - the perfect son.”

That’s his fantasy. He dreams of being Yang Yu Zhe. A talented writer. He wants to replace him. And he goes around to find the best lover, father and son for himself. But because his fantasy is mixed with reality of what he experienced in his childhood, this new family is also filled with betrayal and deception. Therefore he tortured & killed them - his way of keeping them for himself forever.

Ouyang Lin can’t believe what he is hearing: “But this is only in his head. He killed four people that he didn’t know just to satisfy his fantasy?”

Bo Jinyan answers: “The links he established in the four victims’ life is a good enough motive for a twisted psychopath. Furthermore, it answers the question as to why he came to Hong Kong. Long distance traveling increases his risk of being exposed. Also, Hong Kong is a much smaller city, with a highly proficient and efficient police force. There’s no logical reason why he wants to be here. Except to attend the 2013 Hong Kong Galaxy Writing Competition Award Ceremony. It was held on the second day he came to Hong Kong. As I said before, he is an egoistic

anti-society psychopath. The reason he came all the way to Hong Kong was because he wanted to attend this event."

Jian Yao thinks to herself. That's true. If his dream is to become a famous novelist, this might well be the reason he is here.

Bo Jinyan: "Now, why did he put duct tape over the man's mouth when he was imprisoning him? It's likely that both of them entered the same competition. No.1 did not get an award. So, there is a chance they've met in the award ceremony. He knows the identity of No.1. Therefore, he was not allowed to speak or else he might reveal it in front of the other victims."

Suddenly, all the random decisions made sense. Why did he choose those people, the methods he used to torture and kill them, the 'souvenirs' he took.... Towards the end, he released himself from the fantasy that he is Yang Yu Zhe, and enters back into his world of hatred. He abandoned them. Now, the cycle is about to repeat. He will look for the next person he wants to 'replace', 'build' another family and then kill them off..."

Bo Jinyan looks out of the window, and focuses on the road they are driving on: "His next target, is the other winner of the Galaxy Writing Competition."

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Half an hour later.

The car is stopped in front of a small house. There are a few police cars there already. The neighbours are watching curiously from their properties. This is the house of the second Galaxy Writing competition.

Bo Jinyan and the others get out of the car. Ouyang Lin takes the leads. He walks up to an officer that's already there. The officer

updates him: "A neighbour said the whole family has gone out with a friend. But no one knows where they are"

Ouyang Lin gives Bo Jinyan a glance.

BJY is quiet. Jian Yao understands Ouyang's glance. The 'friend'. Is that No.1?

Has he started round 2?

Ouyang Lin asks the officer: "What about the award ceremony?" The officer answers: "They are collating all the photos, videos and information together. Once the file is ready, it will be sent to us."

The sun is inching its way to the west. There are a lot of officers inside and outside of the house. They are looking for every piece of information that might help to find them quickly.

Bo Jinyan is leaning on the first floor balcony railings. He has a photo frame in his hand. Inside, there's a photo of the missing family: Dad, mom, two kids and the dad's father.

Jian Yao walks to him and asks softly: "Will he treat them the same way as the others?"

Bo Jinyan thinks for a while and answers: "This is a real family. It's even more attractive for him. He will want to replace the dad and live with the rest of the family members..."

Jian Yao is disgusted at the thought. It's both amazing and scary that Bo Jinyan can understand these psychopaths so well. Even though he is so intelligent, but if he has to think in the shoes of a psychopath all the time... Suddenly, she feels very sorry for him.

She holds his hand and says: “Jinyan, when this case is over, let’s take a holiday. You said you want to bring me to America. Let’s not take up any cases then. I want your full attention on me.”

Her voice is soft and sweet.

Bo Jinyan takes a look at her and smiles: “OK. I agree.”

He answers without hesitation. Jian Yao is surprised but very pleased. She squeezes her hand a little tighter.

Bo Jinyan is also very pleased.

- Oh, she is so possessive of me. I love it. I’ll do whatever that will make her happy.

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One hour later. The Hong Kong police found the family.

Bo Jinyan and the others return to the car. Anam shows them an image on his lap top.

It’s a beach near Tsim Sha Tsui. It’s backed to a forrest. It’s a remote and slightly isolated campsite. There are a few fishing rods at the water edge, a tent, and some luggages. But no one is there.

(Note from TB: Ok..... obviously author is not too familiar with the geography of Hong Kong. Beach, forrest and camping in Tsim Sha Tsui? That’s impossible.)

“We found their car in the carpark. According to their relatives, the luggage belongs to the family.” Ouyang Lin explains: “According to the forensic team, they have left the site for more than three hours.”

Three hours is enough time for 'him' to bring them anywhere in Hong Kong.

But Bo Jinyan laughs: "Cordon off Tsim Sha Tsui and do not allow traffic to get in and out of the region. He is not far away."

Anam asks: "Why?"

Ouyang Lin steps on the accelerator, and the car speeds off. Bo Jinyan sits leisurely at the back seat. He replies: "Because, according to his plans, we are still running around in circles trying to find him based on the profile he wanted us to see. He is still safe until the bodies of the second lot of victims are discovered by us. By then, he will have abandoned where he is staying, his tools, cars... He will use a new identity so we can't find him. So, for now, there is no necessity for him to change the location where he imprisons his victims. His house is not far from the campsite."

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All the police are deployed to search for a house that fits the following description in the Tsim Sha Tsui area:

1. A house with a reasonable amount of land, so that the actual house is far from its immediate neighbours.
2. The house has a floor area of at least 2000 square feet. It will most probably have a cellar.
3. The owner has a Honda black seven seater vehicle.
4. The owner lives alone.

It's getting darker. Ouyang Lin bought sandwiches on a roadside store and passes to the others. They have a quick and quiet dinner and then continue with their investigation.

They have come across three houses that fit that description so far, but none of them is what they are looking for.

They approach the fourth house. There's no black car in the driveway.

Bo Jinyan looks at the house. It's a villa with lots of flowers in the front gate. All the drapes and curtains are closed but there's light coming though the gaps.

"This fits his style." says Bo Jinyan. Ouyang Lin nods. The other officers that came with them draw their guns from their pouch.

Slowly, they surround the villa. There's a smaller unit next to the main house. The door of the unit is suddenly opened. A woman in her forties walk out. She gets a big fright when she sees so many officers in the property. Ouyang Lin puts up his fore finger in front of his mouth. It's a hand signal for her to keep quiet. Bo Jinyan sweeps a glance to Jian Yao. J Yao quickly walks over and asks the lady softly: "We are with the police. We are on an investigation. Who lives here?" The lady is very surprised. She answers quietly: "His name is Mr. Mei Yuanjun."

Bo Jinyan walks over and asks her: "Does he live alone? Does he own a black Honda 7 seater? Is he a writer?"

The lady is stunned: "Yes... how did you know? You guys are"

Jian Yao's heart tightens. Bo Jinyan has a victorious smile on his face.

It's him.

"Get inside. Close the door and don't come out." Bo Jinyan says to the lady. Then he gives a sign to Ouyang Lin. Ouyang Lin nods and signals the other officers to moves towards the villa.

Bo Jinyan gives a sign to Anam, who is still in the car, to call for the police station for support.

Suddenly, there is a high squealing noise. It's from the tyres of a black Porsche coming out from a garage around the back of the villa.

"Stop!" yells Ouyang Lin, as he takes out his gun and fires a few warning shots. But the Porsche just ignores him. In the blink of an eye, it made a sharp turn and disappears down the main road.

"Quick!" Everyone rushes back to the car to go after him.

Chapter 69

"Sit tight." says Ouyang Lin as his foot slams on the accelerator.

Because they are travelling in a high speed, the car swings to one side as they are turning the corner. Bo Jinyan puts his arm around Jian Yao's waist so she can be more steady. They manage to catch up to the black Porsche. They are just behind him.

"Oh no!" says one of the officer that has joined them in their car: "It's the Sai Kung night markets ahead."

They have left the highway. They are now driving on a road with more traffic. There's also pedestrians walking along either side of the road. Soon they lose track of the black Porsche.

Obviously, he has his escape route planned.

"I have asked for road blocks to be set on the fifteen exits that the road might lead to." Anam says as he quickly types on his laptop.

"That's of no use." says Bo Jinyan: "He will abandon his car and walk. Have your people guard the entrances to the night market."

Ouyang Lin nods. They are so close to catching him. They can't let him sneak into the night market. It will be very hard to find him amongst the massive crowd."

They are now in an area full of people and cars. Ouyang Lin has to reduce the speed of the car. He takes out his phone and calls the other officers: "Get a team over here and guard the west end of the market entrance..."

"Boss!" says the officer on the other side: "We have an emergency situation here. There is a bomb."

Everyone looks ahead to the end of the street. A wave of people are suddenly rushing down towards them. Suddenly, the place is in chaos. There are people everywhere.

It's too late. He has caused chaos.

"What's happening?" Ouyang Lin asks the officer over the phone: "Have you notified the bomb squad yet?"

The officer replies: "Yes, we have. They should arrive in 5 mins. There's a man strapped with a bomb in his body. He is lying in the middle of the road. We are evacuating the people and residents in the area."

Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao are holding each other's hand tightly. Bo Jinyan is scanning through the crowd. Jian Yao knows he is trying to find No.1.

"I just received the news that the family has been rescued from the villa." says Anam: "They have injuries on their bodies, but none of them are fatal."

Jian Yao is relieved.

Then she pauses. If the whole family is rescued, then who is the 'human' bomb lying on the ground?

She starts walking towards the site, Her palms are sweating. By now, the crowd has dispersed. Her eyes are blocked by the police cars and officers that surround the street.

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A man is lying on the ground, motionless.

There are wounds on his body. He is only wearing a dirty singlet, and a pair of torn trousers. His hair looks like it hasn't been cut for a month. It's covering half his face.

"Is that him?" Bo Jinyan asks.

Jian Yao feels like there is a lump in her throat. She answers: "It's too far away. I can't tell. But from the shape of the body.... yes."

It's him. Something in her heart tells her.

An officer next to them passes her a pair of binoculars. She puts it to her face and looks.

His wounds look worse in close up view. A familiar and handsome face that has obviously lost a lot of weight...

Jian Yao puts her hand over her mouth. Her vision blurs as tears fill her eyes.

"He is still breathing." says Bo Jinyan. He holds her hand tightly.

The bomb squad is here. Two experts wearing protective gear walks towards Li Xunran. When they are close enough, they examine the bomb, then they leave him and get back behind the safety line.

Jian Yao's heart starts to sink.

One of the expert takes off his helmet. He shakes his head and says to Ouyang Lin: "We can't dismantle it in time. The set up is complicated, we will need at least an hour. But there's only 5 minutes left on the timer. Unless the person who assembled it stops it by remote control, we can't save him."

— — — — —

Time passes slowly. Even though it's only a minute, it's like they have gone through a few incarnation and live several lives already.

Great sadness overwhelms Jian Yao. She stands there looking at Li Xunran. Her face is pale as a sheet of paper.

"Sorry, we can't save him." He quietly tells Bo Jinyan. Ouyang Lin has been informed of Li Xunran's identity.

"Anam, get 'his' phone number from the family that's just been rescued." Bo Jinyan says.

Jian Yao and the others turn to him. They watch as Bo Jinyan reaches to his jacket pocket and takes out his phone.

He wants to speak with 'him'?

Jian Yao looks up at him. Is 'he' going to answer the call?

Even at this critical moment, Bo Jinyan looks calm and fully in control.

The phone rings - Do...Do... Do... He manages to get through. Anam quickly connects his phone to his laptop. He is trying to trace the location of the phone. He gives Jian Yao a pair of headphones so she can listen to the conversation. Ouyong Lin looks at his watch. He signals to Bo Jinyan - We have 4 minutes before the bomb will explode.

Everyone is holding their breath.

After about five rings, there's a click sound. Then a background noise of traffic and people talking in the street.

"Hi." says Bo Jinyan

The other end is silent for a moment before he also says Hi.

"Have you managed to escape yet?"

Like he is talking to an old friend.

The man on the other end of the phone laughs: "Oh.... almost."

Everyone is tensed up. Ouyang Lin looks at his watch: 3 minutes and 30 seconds. He looks at Anam. Anam is looking at his computer screen. But he doesn't look very happy. Obviously, he is encountering difficulty with tracing the location of the call.

"Let's trade. I have something for you in exchange for Li Xunran's life." He says slowly, like he is chatting to a friend.

Everyone is amazed. What does he have to trade?

On the other end of the phone, 'he' is curious as well: "Oh... tell me..."

— — — — —

The area surrounding Li Xunran is empty and quiet. The officers standing at a distance is waiting for the final outcome. Is a miracle going to happen?

Hundreds of metres away, there is a huge crowd standing in the streets. Some of them are quickly leaving the area. Some of them are standing around to find out what's going on. A lot of them are on phone, updating their friends of the events happening. A tall man wearing a trench coat is also holding his phone. He walks towards a quiet lane in the side street.

Some policeman is holding a sketch of 'him' based on the descriptions of the rescued family. They are scanning through the crowd to see if they can locate him by any chance.

"He" walks into another side street so that he is away from the officers with the sketches. Then he says to Bo Jinyan: "Just wait a second. I have to take another call." 'He' looks around and makes sure he is alone. Then he tears off two fake thick eyebrows, a fake beard and a silicon patch on top of his nose. Suddenly he looks like a different man.

He shoved those brows etc into his pocket. He then picks up the phone again. He leisurely walks past the police officers, and talks to Bo Jinyan at the same time: "My apologies. You may continue now."

As he walks past the officers, they took a look at him, looked at the sketch again, and let him pass.

— — — — —

Ouyang Lin signals Bo Jinyan again. 2 minutes and 50 seconds left.

Bo Jinyan sweeps him a look. He says faintly: "Tomorrow, every newspaper will reveal that a budding writer named Mei Yuanjun is a psychopathic killer."

'He' smiles: "That's great."

Bo Jinyan continues: "Human beings are curious. You will become their favourite topic of conversation. Everyone will read your book. You didn't gain the favour of the judges from the Galaxy writers competition. But it doesn't matter anymore. The public can make up their own mind about you. They will find that you are a gifted and talented writer. That's always been part of your aim. You've succeeded. Congratulations."

Everyone is confused. What does this have to do with bargaining with 'him'?

But 'he' continues to chat leisurely to Bo Jinyan: "Are you trying to suck up to me?"

Bo Jinyan smiles: "No. I am threatening you."

Everyone is stunned. Then they hear Bo Jinyan continues: "Our game is fair. I won't interfere with the attention you will get from the media. But if Li Xunran blows up before me, then I have to change the rules of the game.

I am sure the media is interested in hearing your hidden and secret stories from a world renowned criminal psychologist."

For the first time, 'he' is quiet. They can only hear his breathing from the other end of the phone. Slow, calm and deep.

There's not much time left. Bo Jinyan continues: "For example, how you were abandoned by your mother when you were young. But when you became an adult, you physically abused and killed her to vent your anger. And of course, I cannot leave out the fact that during your teenage years, you had an incest relationship with your aunt over a long period of time.

I don't mind telling them that you have had sex with both men and women of different age group and ethnicity, as well as with animals. This is perhaps more than what they can bear.

But they will be most disappointed to find out that you dropped out from university, A budding talented writer who didn't even finish his studies.... If these things are made known, what do you think the public's reactions will be?

Oh, I know. Human beings are curious. But there is a line of morality that you can't go past. Once you have past that line, you are no longer a legend. You are a disgusting piece of garbage. People will only think of all the awful and dirty acts of yours whenever they see the name Mei Yuanjun. No one will remember you for your writing talents. Is that the legacy you are after?"

Ouyang Lin signals Bo Jinyan again. 60 seconds left.

'He' speaks again, with an icy smile: "What a pathetic threat."

Bo Jinyan cuts him off: "Oh yeah, you wanna bet?"

Bo Jinyan starts to walk towards Li Xunran. Jian Yao rushes out after him. He turns around and says to her: "Don't worry. Go back." Then he turns to Ouyang Lin and says: "Take her back."

Ouyang Lin is stunned too. He pulls her back and hands her to another officer. Then he steps forward and says to Bo Jinyan: "Don't go over, the bomb will get you too."

Bo Jinyan signals him to go back. Ouyang Lin pauses for a while. Then he stands back. He calls the bomb squad team. One of them rushes forward to put a protective top and helmet on Bo Jinyan. He doesn't even look at him. He just asks him to leave. Then he stands next to Li Xunran.

Jian Yao is held back by a few officers. Her heart is pounding hard. She is breathing very heavily. Tears start to run down her cheeks.

Jinyan...

She knows what he is doing. She knows he will win. But she can't bear the sight of him risking himself in such dangerous circumstances.

She hears through the headphones. "He' is speaking again: "Do you want to die with that police?"

Jian Yao takes the binoculars. She can see Bo Jinyan bending down and placing his mobile phone on top of the timer of the bomb. "Click... Click... Click..." They can all hear it. 'He' can hear it.

Bo Jinyan gives a small laugh and says to 'him': "I am right next to the bomb. I won't die. I know it. You are not going to blow the bomb up. Because I understand you. 'Mei Yuanjun' is an important identity for you, you treasure it like you treasure your life. Also, I think I understand you more than you think... Oh... You have 10 seconds to consider. Good bye,"

"Click..." Bo Jinyan hang up on 'him'!

The officers there are dumbfounded. They can't believe what's happened. Jian Yao is shaking. She has a smile on her face, but her tears are still streaming down.

Only Bo Jinyan remains calm. He stands besides Li Xunan, looking at them.

Ouyang Lin's face is pale. He is counting: "8 , 7, 6, 5,"

Jian Yao holds her breath. She fixes her eyes on Bo Jinyan.

"3, 2, 1!"

Quietness.

Bo Jinyan curls his lips to form a smile.

Suddenly there's applause from the officers.

The bomb didn't go off.

Everyone looks excited. The bomb squad hurries to Li Xunran again. Jian Yao runs towards Bo Jinyan and throws herself into his arms. Bo Jinyan holds her tightly. She is back to his warm and familiar embrace. She hears his strong and steady heartbeat. Her heart seems to melt into one with his.

One hour later.

Bo Jinyan is holding hands with Jian Yao. They are standing next to the ambulance. Li Xunran is still unconscious. He is put on a stretcher.

"He is very weak, but his vital signs look good. We will need to do further examinations when we get to the hospital to be certain." says the medic.

Jian Yao nods and watches the ambulance drives off.

The surrounding roads are still blocked off. The police are still busy screening people. Even though he managed to escape tonight, at least they have rescued the family and Li Xunran. It's a huge breakthrough. And they have a lot more information about him. It shouldn't be long till they capture him.

It's late at night. One of the officers drive Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao back to the hotel.

The two of them are sitting at the backseat. Jian Yao looks at him. A burst of unspeakable bitterness fills her. Everyone thought Bo Jinyan was using the pressure of the media to 'trade' with 'him'. And that Bo Jinyan is so brave to stand with Li Xunran.

But she understands why Bo Jinyan did that. He used himself to trade with 'him'. 'He' wanted Bo Jinyan as his partner, so he won't blow Bo Jinyan up. The only way Bo Jinyan could be sure that he would win is to put his own life on the gambling table too.

But why? Even she knows that in her head, her heart still feels so painful?

— — — — —

In another corner of this city.

A black Cadillac is waiting at the roadside.

After a long wait, a man in uniform gets out of the crowd and gets into this car.

"Drive." He leans back, loosens his tie. He sounds tired.

"Yes, sir." The driver answers.

The car leaves the busy town area and drives to a villa in the country side. This is one of the most affluent areas of Hong Kong, where all the rich people reside.

The security guard opens the door of the car and greets the man: "Sir, welcome back."

He walks in slowly.

— — —

He is sitting on an expensive and extravagant sofa. He opens a bottle of red wine and pours himself a glass. On the TV, it's showing the news of the serial killer. They are showing images of officers at the night market.

The man kept smiling until the image of Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao appears on TV. Then his smile disappears. He throws his glass on the ground and walks leisurely down the corridor. He opens the thick metal doors of the last room. It's a secret chamber. He whistles as he walks in.

It's dim place. A man is chained in his hands and feet. He is swatting on the floor. His handsome eyes look empty and unfocused. When the prisoner saw the man come on, he tenses up.

After a while.

The edge of the knife is pushed into the prisoner's flesh. He yells in pain. But all the sound is well contained within those specially sound proofed walls.

The man who is torturing is excited by his prisoner's response. He continues to cut him with the knife.

"I... thought.. we are friends..." his prisoner begs him: "Please let me go. I'll give you anything."

The man suddenly freezes his smile. He lifts his knife and chop off one of his prisoner's fingers.

The prisoner screams painfully.

The man throws the knife aside. He looks at his prisoner and says slowly: "Do not be mistaken. I only have one friend." Then he lifts up his head and mutters to himself: "But he won't come to me right now."

Then he smiles: "But soon. When I destroy him, he will belong to me."

Chapter 70-71

(Note from TB: In the internet version, there are 84 chapters in total. However, chapter 70 is completely blank, and chapter 71 are side stories which you should read after the ending. I am not sure why that is. But I checked a few website, and it's all the same. For consistency purposes, I will use the same chapter numbers as the internet version.)

Chapter 72

"Xie Han. English name - Jabber. Born in California, US. Age - 26." A Hong Kong officer is presenting the information as an image of a handsome Asian man is projected onto the screen: "His father was the Chairman of Tong Neng Corporation before he passed away. His personal asset worth is over 1 billion US dollars. His mother was a biologist. His parents divorced when he was four. She gave up her custody rights."

Based on Bo Jinyan's interactions with No.1 last night, and the deductions he made previously, the FBI and the Hong Kong have set up a special unit to work together on the case. And they have found a person that fits all the description.

The officer continues: "Even though we have a name, we have difficulty issuing a warrant of arrest. He disappeared in 2006. All his personal assets have been moved overseas. Since then, no one has seen him. We suspect that he has had plastic surgery done to him. Look at this."

He shows a different image on the screen. It's a photo taken during the 2013 HK Galaxy writers Award Ceremony. The photo of "Mei Yuanjun" fits the description of the family that was kidnapped earlier, but it looks very different from Xie Han's.

"Experts say there are a few features on his face that look like it's pasted on. For example, his brows. There might be other features that have been 'camouflaged' as well. But even just by looking at the shape of his face, it's obvious that there are a number of changes to how he used to look. The possibility of plastic surgery is extremely high."

Ouyang Lin says: "So, even though we have his name, identity and even his DNA, we can't find him because we still don't know what he looks like. And there is a possibility that he is using a new name and a fake identity. We are looking for a needle in a haystack!"

Everyone is quiet. The team leader look at Bo Jinyan: "Professor, do you have any ideas?"

Bo Jinyan answers faintly: "I agree with Sergeant Ouyang's views. But he was forced to abort his most current plan because of us. He will need some time to organise something that is more complex and cruel. So we must seize time to check the top 1% of the rich people in Hong Kong. It's a competition on speed. If we find him quickly, we can stop the next wave of murders."

— — — — —

The sun warms the sheets on the bed. There is a smell of disinfectant and medication in the air. The usually pungent scent brings peace to the minds of those who are there.

Jian Yao is sitting on the side of the bed. She looks at Li Xunran. He is asleep at the moment. All his injuries are treated. He is still the

handsome officer she knows. Just that he has lost a lot of weight and his face is heartbreakingly pale.

She holds on to his hand.

Bo Jinyan is sitting in a sofa behind her. He is quietly accompanying his girlfriend. Occasionally, he will look up at the man that's lying in bed. Hmm... Li Xunran is still an annoying guy. But he will tolerate him for two reasons. 1. He is Jian Yao's good friend. 2. He is the only other person (besides himself) who survived after being imprisoned by the Flower Cannibal for a long period of time.

Jian Yao can feel Li Xunran's fingers moving. Then she sees his eyes slowly open.

"Xunran...." She calls him softly. When Bo Jinyan hears that he is awake, he stands up and stands beside Jian Yao.

Li Xunran's lips are still cracked from dehydration. He gives a small smile: "Come on, pinch me... I need to know if this is a dream."

Jian Yao's eyes tear up. She says softly: "You are safe now. Jinyan and I, and the Hong Kong Police Force will protect you."

Li Xunran looks at her. Tears of joy swell up in his eyes. He squeezes the hand that is holding her. They look into each other's eyes and laugh together.

Then he lets go of her hand. He turns to Bo Jinyan and says with a coarse voice: "Thank you." He reaches his hand out to Bo Jinyan.

He is clever enough to know that he owes his lucky escape to Bo Jinyan. He is truly grateful.

Bo Jinyan reaches his hands out and shakes his hand: "You don't have to thank me. You are a lucky man."

Li Xunran smiles. Jian Yao takes a look at Bo Jinyan: "Yes, he is a good person, so the gods looked after him. But you don't have to be so 'humble' if it's not for you..." She says it with admiration and love.

Oh.... Bo Jinyan's lips curl into a smile.

That's excellent. Her love for him is getting deeper and richer every day.

— — — — —

Li Xunran tells them briefly what happened during the time he was kidnapped. He went to the hospital for a check up after returning from B City. The nurse gave him some aesthetics before doing some tests. When he woke up again, he was in a cell. He didn't even know when or how Xie Han did it.

Bo Jinyan asks: "Why didn't he kill you?" It doesn't make sense that the sole purpose to capture him is to use him as a human bomb in Hong Kong. Why did he go through so much trouble?

Li Xunran smiles: "I remember... during the killer machine case... you said... an organised psychopaths wants to find satisfaction and joy from torturing his victims.... So... I made sure I did everything against his wishes. He would not get any satisfaction from me."

He didn't eat. He didn't talk back. He didn't react to any of his provocations. He just pretended Xie Han was not around.

Jian Yao feels sorry for her friend. Bo Jinyan replies: "That's a dumb move, but at least it worked."

Jian Yao quickly pulls his sleeves to protest. Bo Jinyan looks at her long pretty fingers. He decides to keep quiet. He gives her a small smile.

Li Xunran observes them. He smiles too.

Jian Yao and Bo Jinyan stayed until around 7pm. Li Xunran watches them go out of the ward. Then he closes his eye.

He thinks for a while, then gives a big sigh. He has a smile on his face.

Thank you. I am very lucky to have friends like you.

— — — — —

The dark sky looks like a large black curtain wrapped around the earth. Misty rain gently and quietly lands on the ground.

Jian Yao's vision is blurred. She is standing in the fog, she sees a man standing in the distance. A tall man with a handsome face, lean and long body. A familiar man.

Jinyan.... Jinyan....

She steps into the rain and walks towards him. But he turns around and runs in a different direction and disappears in the darkness. Then she hears a loud explosion. She sees fire and smoke coming from the area Bo Jinyan is in.

The fire engulfed him. It's going to engulf me too. She thought.

Jinyan— She used all her strength, but no sound is coming out of her mouth.

Jinyan— tears filled her eyes. Suddenly she starts to fall... into a bottomless pit.

.....

“uh....”

Jian Yao opens her eyes. She is sitting on the armchair in the hotel. Outside, the rain is falling. She can hear the sound of the raindrops brushing the window. There is a blanket covering her body, and a book on her lap.

She fell asleep.

She gets up and walks to the bathroom. After splashing some water over her face, she looks into the mirror. It's a dream. Only a dream. Yet, she feels sad, and afraid. The dream only reveals the fear she has in her heart. The fear that came to her when Bo Jinyan walked towards the bomb yesterday.

She looks at her watch. it's 9pm. Jian Yao is wearing a nightgown. It's getting a bit cold. She grabs a shawl to wrap around her body. Then she walks into the study. Bo Jinyan is standing in front of a white board. Quiet and focused.

There's a map of the California US on the white board. There are markings on various locations. He is reviewing the old Flower Cannibal case. Jian Yao walks up to him. As she is about to hug him, the phone rings.

Bo Jinyan turns around to pick up the call. He sees Jian Yao. He gives her a smile, then he says hello to the caller.

Jian Yao walks over to stand beside him.

It's Yin Ziqi on the phone. She's arrived in Hong Kong for a while now. But Bo Jinyan has been too busy to contact her.

Bo Jinyan frowns: "... there's no sign of him. Well... there is a good chance that he is still alive like Li Xunran. It will be easier for me if you aren't around. Go back to China..." he pauses for a while: "...up to you. Take care of yourself.... Of course... I will be careful."

Jian Yao listens quietly. She wraps her hands around his waist, and rests her head in his chest. His steady and strong heartbeat has a soothing effect on her.

“Ok. I get the signal.” A low magnetic voice speaks.

Jian Yao looks up. He is looking down at her. Their faces are just inches apart. He’s finished his conversation with his sister. Bo Jinyan stares at her.

Jian Yao blushes. She lets go of him and says softly: “What signal? I didn’t give you any signals.”

“Are you sure?” He bents his head down a little more. His masculine scent moving closer towards her. “Don’t you want me?”

Jian Yao’s face is bright red. How is she supposed to answer him?

She refuses to give an answer. Instead, she turns around and walks out of the room. However, Bo Jinyan has known her long enough to know that, for women - silence means yes - under these circumstances. He smiles and follows her out of the room.

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(Sorry for the interruption, 18+ readers can access the next section at <http://lmfydx.blogspot.co.nz/p/chapter-72.html>)

— — — — —

A beautiful and sweet evening for a pair of lovers. A time to temporarily put aside all the cares of the world, and concentrate on each other.

But there are others out there who can’t sleep. The night is long.

Yin Ziqi is lying alone on a King size bed. She's been tossing around, unable to sleep for hours.

She sits up, and looks at the spacious and opulently decorated room. Sadness comes over her.

This is Lin Yi Yang's villa in Mid Levels in Hong Kong. She's arrived in Hong Kong for a few days now. There's no progress in finding Lin Yi Yang yet. She wants to go back to China, but Lin Yi Yang's mom insists that she should stay in Hong Kong. So she has been using the time to inspect the Hong Kong offices of Lin Corporations and Yin Corporations, just to keep herself busy.

Perhaps it's the worries and fears, she's been suffering from insomnia for a few nights already. She calls their family doctor, who says it's probably due to stress.

She gets out of bed and walks to the study. She picks up a book and starts to read.

— — — — —

All the lights suddenly go off. Yin Ziqi looks at the darkness around her.

This villa has its own generator. Even if there's a power outage in the area, this house should not be affected. She frowns and calls the maid: "Zhang Ma! Zhang Ma!"

Nobody answers.

She starts to feel a little uncomfortable. Just as she gets up from the sofa, she hears footsteps from the stairways.

"Ms Yin." A tall man appears at the door. He sounds a little out of breath. Perhaps it's because he was rushing to bring her the news: "I am

very sorry. There's a short circuit in the system. We are fixing it right now."

She smiles politely: "Thank you. You are..."

The young man smiles.

"I'm one of Mr.Lin's bodyguards." His voice has a natural soothing quality about it. It has the power to make people relax and put their trust in him: "Nice to meet you."

Chapter 73

2 weeks later, on a flight going to Maryland, US.

Bo Jinyan is sitting on a comfortable and spacious first class seat. He looks at Jian Yao, who is mixing his tuna fish salad for him. Then she butters a piece of toast for him. Fu Ziyu observes for a while. Then he can't stand the sight anymore. He says disapprovingly to Bo Jinyan: "Don't you have any hands? Do it yourself!"

Bo Jinyan can't be bothered to argue with him. He continues to admire Jian Yao's every move. Everything about her is perfect.

Jian Yao just smiles.

She doesn't 'serve' him all the time. But every now and then, she just wants to pamper him. Because.. well... that's just what lovers do for each other.

Sitting next to Fu Ziyu , is Yin Ziqi, She smiles at her brother and Jian Yao. Then she looks out to the window. She thinks about her fiancé. She is concerned for his safety and wellbeing.

Anam is in the same cabin too. He sits at the back, away from the four of them. He is playing video games to keep himself occupy during the long flight.

— — — — —

Xie Han's case is not tracking much progress. It's a difficult task to investigate the rich in any countries. There's always a lot of hindrances. It's hard to trace their assets. And there are often complicated family relationships and illegitimate children... It's not easy to put a list together.

The reason they are going to the US is because Bo Jinyan received an email from his mentor from the university. Many years ago, this professor received an anonymous letter on areas of criminal psychologist. However, the views are very extreme. He thought the tone of the letter and the views presented in the letter matches Xie Han's writing style and profile. So he invites Bo Jinyan to investigate further and analyse it with him.

Bo Jinyan has invited Anam to come along as they may need his help with fingerprint matching and other technical analysis done to the letter. Like Bo Jinyan, he is also an university professor, a special consultant employed by the department of Social Security. But he is not a police officer. Therefore, he can only come along as part of an academic exchange programme.

As for Yin Ziqi and Fu Ziyu , they are both going home for Christmas. Yin Ziqi's fleet of bodyguards are with them, assuring their safety.

It's early winter. The last of the autumn leaves covers the ground. One can start to feel the winter chills as the cool wind blows.

Jian Yao and Bo Jinyan are walking side by side.

When you love someone, everything you do with him/her, and every place you go together becomes beautiful. Even when you are in an unfamiliar place, the atmosphere becomes cordial and relaxed.

“What are you looking at?” Bo Jinyan asks Jian Yao.

“This is a nice place.” says Jian Yao.

“Really? The buildings are ugly. There are too many people. It’s too noisy. The only thing nice about this place is that they have the best school of criminal psychology in the US.”

Jian Yao: “....”

Well, no surprises here. He is able to completely change the mood and ruin any ambience by saying just a few sentences.

Fu Ziyu is following behind enthusiastically. He is showing Anam the famous sights of the university campus. Bo Jinyan, Jian Yao and Anam are only staying in the US for three days. After that, they will be flying back to Hong Kong. So, they’ve agreed to have dinner together today.

Behind them, there are five bodyguards. The Chinese police can’t send any officers to accompany them to America for political reasons. Therefore, Yin Ziqi has organised bodyguards for them.

They are almost at the building for criminal psychology. Bo Jinyan turns to face Jian Yao. He gives her a peck on the cheeks, then turns to tell Fu Ziyu : “Please look after her for me.”

Fu Ziyu is speechless: “You are only leaving for a few minutes!?”

Bo Jinyan answers casually: “We made a promise. I will stay by her side 24/7 when we are on an investigation.”

Fu Ziyu : “Oh, that’s sickening for the rest of us.” Jian Yao face blushes. She gives Bo Jinyan a push: “Just go.”

Bo Jinyan takes another look at her, and give her a smile before walking off.

Due to the sensitivity of the information, the professor doesn't want to reveal the information to anyone else other than Bo Jinyan, to avoid getting into trouble. So Jian Yao, Fu Ziyu and Anam, together with their five bodyguards in their black suit, wait outside the entrance of the building. Naturally, the sight attracts the attention of a lot of students. But they just look at them curiously as they walk past. No one comes up to bother them.

After waiting for a while, they see a champagne coloured sports car, followed by a Hummer, approaching them. Fu Ziyu smiles and admire the nice cars. Soon, the cars stop in the carpark that is approximately 50 metres from them. Yin Ziqi gets out of the sports car wearing a white fur coat. She is surrounded by a few body guards too. She has come to take them for dinner.

Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao were too busy to meet up with Yin Ziqi when she was in Hong Kong. Jian Yao notices that she looks a little gaunt, despite the calm smile she has on her face. She feels sad for her.

Yin Ziqi walks up to her and says: "Someone wants to speak with you." Jian Yao is stunned. Yin Ziqi smiles and says to the two other men: "We'll talk over there." Then she signals to Jian Yao to go into the car with her.

Fu Ziyu laughs: "Hey hey, your brother emphasised that I can't let her out of my sight while he is away. Where are you bringing her?"

Yin Ziqi glances at him: "Do you want to come along?"
Fu Ziyu stands up. He follows them to the car.

Jian Yao and Yin Ziqi are inside the car. Fu Ziyu stands outside and looks around. Yin Ziqi passes her a mobile phone. The line is connected. It's Bo Jinyan's father.

She says politely: "Hello, uncle."

The voice of an old man on the other side of the line: "Hello. I hear that you are Jinyan's assistant."

"Yes." She answers. She has overcome the initial shock. She is not as nervous anymore.

"He didn't even call me. I would not have known he is back in town if Ziqi hadn't told me." He said: "Come home for dinner tonight."

Jian Yao smiles to herself: "Sure. I will pass on your words to him."

Like father like son...

— — — — —

While Jian Yao is concentrating on the phone call with Bo Jinyan's father, Yin Ziqi takes her handbag and gets out of the car. She walks towards a white building, where the toilets are. Two bodyguards follow her. Fu Ziyu takes a glance at her, but he is not too concerned about her. Firstly, she has body guards with her. Secondly and more importantly, Bo Jinyan has assigned the task of looking after his girlfriend to him. He can only focus on one person at a time.

Anam is sitting on the bench just outside the building of the criminal psychology department. He is browsing through the internet with his lap top.

It's just after midday. The sun is high in the sky. It's the first time Jian Yao is speaking to Bo Jinyan's father. It's a little sudden, but it's also

quite a pleasant experience. He is asking her all sorts of questions about how Bo Jinyan is doing. His tone sounds cold, but he obviously cares a lot about his son. Jian Yao can't help but smile.

Every now and then, she looks up at the window of the room where Bo Jinyan is. She wonders how his conversation with the professor is coming along.

Suddenly, Fu Ziyu notices there are a crowd gathering around the white building where Yin Ziqi is.

"Oh my gosh! Someone is hurt." Someone shouts from that direction. Fu Ziyu takes a look. There is a person lying on the ground. He recognises the fur coat. It belongs to Yin Ziqi. There's blood on parts of her body.

He quickly runs towards her. The two guards that are standing by the car also rushes forward: "Chairman!" Anam notices what's happening. He too stands up and takes out his phone while rushing there.

But after Fu Ziyu takes a couple of steps. He stops. Just as he wants to turn back to look at Jian Yao, he hears two soft sounds - "Zi.. Zi...". Then he feels like something has hit his left chest and right abdomen.

It's... gunshots!

He slowly looks down. Blood is seeping through his shirt and onto his suit jacket.

Jian Yao just finished talking to Bo Jinyan's dad when all these happened. She sees from the corners of her eyes a lot of people are running towards a point. She looks up. Before her eyes, she see Fu Ziyu suddenly freezes, then slowly falls to the ground.

She is horrified. Just as she is about to open the car door, someone jumps into the drivers seat. A tall man with broad shoulders. She can only see his back.

.....

In just one minute, so many things have happened.

— — — — —

Bo Jinyan is standing in the professor's office. He has just finished reading the letter.

His instincts tell him that this letter is written by Xie Han. As for whether there's fingerprints on the letter, he will have to pass it to Anam for further testings.

He keeps the letter in the inner pocket of his jacket. He says goodbye to the professor, and reminds the professor to keep himself safe. While he is in the corridor, he feels something is not quite right. He can't explain it, but this causes him to walk faster.

Even before he reaches the entrance, he can hear the noise of the crowd. His face tightens. He starts to run.

In the bright sunlight, a group of students stands in the square next to the white building. Yin Ziqi is lying sideways on the ground, with a knife stuck in her stomach. He can hear someone's voice: "It's suicide... I saw her stabbing herself."

In the car park not far away, Fu Ziyu is lying on the ground. His body is shivering. His suit soaked in blood. Anam is kneeling next to him. He presses hard on his wound. He gives Bo Jinyan a look as he comes towards him.

Bo Jinyan takes a look at Fu Ziyu , then he turns to look at Yin Ziqi. Then he looks around. Again and again. There's no sight of her. For the first time in his life. He feels his heart is about to stop beating. He can hear his own heavy breathing. A wave of great fear and pain covers him. It's the first time he is so overcome by emotions he can't think clearly.

When Jian Yao wakes up again, the first thing she sees is a metal door. She is in a small cell. She is lying on a bed with a metal frame. Her limbs feel very heavy. Her hands and feet are attached to thick long chains.

A great fear covers her like a tidal wave. Every inch of her skin, every muscle seems to feel painful. It's from the fear that's within her. Because she knows what is ahead of her. Pain, and despair.

Her chest feels like it's filled with large pieces of rock. Even her breathing has become difficult.

Everything happened so quickly. It's not long since she said goodbye to Bo Jinyan.

Mom, Jian Xuan, Xunran.

And Jinyan.

I might be leaving you.

She doesn't know how long she has been in the cell. Then she hears footsteps coming from outside the cell. It's coming closer towards her. She also hears a man whistling.

He... is here.

Jian Yao closes her eyes. Then she opens it. She sits up. She puts on a stern face, and looks towards the metal door.

He appears out of the darkness. A simple and well tailored shirt and trousers on a well proportioned body. Short black hair. A pair of bright black eyes are looking at her, with a smile.

Jian Yao suddenly remembers. Images from the past runs past her mind. She feels more hopeless.

She has seen him before.

Now that she has seen his face. He will not let her live.

Chapter 74

“Tonk...Tonk...Tonk...” The sound of turning on light switches. Suddenly, Jian Yao is overwhelmed by hundreds of lights bulbs shining their light onto her. Her pupils can’t adjust to the sharpness of the light. She closes her eyes.

Xie Han is standing not far away from where she is. He laughs like a mischievous boy.

After a while, she is able to open her eyes.

Xie Han looks at her beautiful face, her nice skin complexion, and her dark bright eyes. There is a stillness and quietness about her. He walks closer to her cage, and looks at her with interest.

“Such an exciting moment.... Jenny, I was hoping to see your sweet smile.” He says softly.

Jian Yao remains quiet, as if she didn’t hear his words. She takes a look at her surroundings.

It's the size of a big warehouse. There are containers everywhere. The space in the middle is about the size of a basketball court. The ceiling is installed with rows of spotlights shining down like a stage. And her cage is in the middle of the 'stage'.

About 30 metres in front of her, there's a set of sofas, a bar cabinet, a book shelf, a TV and a bed. There are only 2 tones - black and white. The place is chic, clean and tidy. On a coffee table, there's half a glass of unfinished red wine. A suit jacket lies casually on the sofa.

This is obviously where he is staying, right next to her cage.

— — — — —

The place is quiet and empty. There's only the two of them there. In an unknown place.

Jian Yao tries to avoid eye contact with him. But eventually, their eyes meet. These eyes, are very different from all of the psychopaths she has met before.

"Killing machine" Sun Yong has a pair of hollow and mocking eyes. Even when he was arrested, there was no guilt or nervousness in him. Zhang Cheng, who killed two families under the illusion that they were spies, had a dazed and stubborn look in his eyes. Even Tommy, his gaze is cold and dark... All of them looked like they have no regards or feelings for other people.

But this man, who is labelled as the cruelest serial killer in this century, the godfather for the Flower Cannibal, looks like a warm and charming young man.

That is why, when he came face to face with Bo Jinyan and Jian Yao, playing the most unnoticeable roles, was never discovered by Bo Jinyan.

"You remember me?" He asks gently.

Jian Yao stares at him. She keeps silent.

He was the community police that first arrived at Sun Yong's house. He even stood in front of Bo Jinyan to brief him of his findings.

"Like the briefing report Jian Yao sent us, we found a killing machine in the bedroom."

Xie Han starts to repeats the words he said that day, as if to help her recall their first encounter.

"Professor Bo, I found some words written in blood underneath the bed."

"We need to examine the whole house."

.....

Was that it? Was there a second encounter?

Jian Yao looks up, and notices that his smile deepens.

Yes. More than twice.

Pedestrians that walks past time, a security guard that guards the suburb, the courier man, a community officer some of the cases they were involved in.... it's so easy for him to pretend to be one of 'them'.

He's always been by their side. But even Bo Jinyan fails to notice.

If only she can tell the others. But now...

“OK. Are you hungry?” His words interrupt her thoughts. “It’s not polite to keep a lady hungry while having a conversation. Let’s eat and chat at the same time. Shall we?”

Jian Yao keeps quiet.

She remembers what Li Xunran said to her. The reason Xie Han didn’t kill him -

“I made sure I did everything against his wishes. He would not get any satisfaction out of me.”

He didn’t eat. He didn’t talk back. He didn’t react to any of his provocations. He just pretended Xie Han was not around.

And Bo Jinyan’s comment: “That’s a dumb move, but at least it worked.”

.....

After a short pause, she lifts her hand. It’s the first time she responds to him: “Good, I am hungry too.”

Xie Han gives a smile. He stares at her with a smile.

“You are a brave woman indeed...” He says slowly.

— — — — —

He has put some gentle and romantic music through the sound system. There is not a single window in the warehouse. It’s a complete world of its own. A world that belongs to him alone.

Jian Yao is sitting on the sofa. Her hands and feet still in chains. There is also a long chain around her neck. She is being treated like an animal. The other end of the chains is casually hung onto a coat rack

behind Xie Han. He rolls up his sleeves, and pushes a trolley next to the dining table.

Red wine, candlelight, steak, salad, cheese, dessert... He slowly puts the dishes on the table. Then he lays the napkin, cutlery and plate before Jian Yao. She is sitting very still in her seat, just looking at him. She is not showing any expression on her face.

This is the tactic she will use. To be obedient. Try not to offend him. Don't show any emotions.

Because Bo Jinyan said before in his evaluation of Xie Han, that his sentiment towards men is to conquer and plunder. Therefore, when Li Xunran resisted with stubbornness, even though he was tortured, he was not 'conquered', and therefore managed to keep his life.

But it's different for women. Using Li Xunran's method would be counterproductive. Even though he looks and acts like a gentleman right now, there's a lot of hatred in him. Any resistance from a woman will arouse his desire to kill. He doesn't have any patience when it comes to women. He could kill her and dump the body in front of Bo Jinyan. If she makes him angry, he might destroy her straight away.

So, she has to endure.

But she knows in her mind, that this courteous gentleman standing in front of her, has prepared to treat her more cruelly than any of his other victims. Because she is Bo Jinyan's woman. In his mind, she is a feast that he is ready to taste and sample.

She will buy as much time as she can.

Before Bo Jinyan finds her, she must keep herself alive. No matter how much pain she will suffer, she will live to see him again.

If she is dead.... Bo Jinyan will be alone.

Someone like him will not enter into another relationship again. If she dies, he will be living by himself for the rest of his life.

She can't let this happen.

The man she loves... her only lover.... She cannot lose him.

With these thoughts in her mind, she keeps calm. A strength from within her rises up to keeps her eyes from swelling up with tears. A warm sense of peace soothes the fear that is in her.

She looks at Xie Han. He's finished transferring the dishes onto the table. He sits opposite her, and raises his glass.

She takes her glass, and elegantly sips the red wine.

— — — — —

This meal was quiet and long. Xie Han doesn't like to speak. Every now and then, he will introduce the dish that they are eating, which executive five star chef made it... etc etc. Jian Yao will nod her head. Sometimes, she makes a brief comment.

But most of the time, they dine in silence. At one point in time, Xie Han puts down his cutlery to stare at Jian Yao.

Jian Yao feels very uncomfortable, but she keeps her head down and pretends he is not there.

Finally, the meal is finished.

Xie Han walks over to face her. Jian Yao's palms starts to sweat. He knees down next to her. Her heart pounds. They stare silently at each other.

Suddenly he smiles. He puts out a drawer from underneath the table. There's a syringe with some substance in it. He holds it up. Then he takes one of Jian Yao's arms. His finger are cold. He puts his arm straight on the table. Then he injects the substances into her.

"Let the party begin." He says.

Chapter 75

So that's how Xie Han did it. Jian Yao thought to herself.

The reason why he can mentally control so many people. Basically, it's the use of drugs to cause hallucination. It will make you feel drowsy and slows down your brain's response time.

She is sitting on the cold and hard bed in her cage. He switched off all the spotlights except for the one that's shining onto her bed. It's like she is lying on an isolated island in the middle of the ocean.

He is standing somewhere in the darkness, still whistling, like he is the master of the world.

Her heart is beating very quickly. She can even feel her nerves throb. This is a very uncomfortable feeling. She can hear a humming sound in her ears. She wants to sit up, but her hand slips. Everything around her is a blur. Then she starts to fade in and out of consciousness. She can't think clearly. She doesn't even know where she is.

She feels completely lost.

Her body still feels very uncomfortable. But her vision is getting clearer now. She is relieved. She stands up and look around. She is in her grandfather's house. A familiar room - the old fashioned TV cabinet, the 22 inch colour TV, the red velvet sofa.

But... they died with her father many years ago.

Then she sees a man. He is sitting down with his back to her. But she can see his back. There are rows of very neatly arranged scars.

"Jinyan!" She walks over and wraps her hands around his waist. "Why are you here?"

Bo Jinyan slowly leans towards her. His face is pale as a sheet. His eyes closed. There is no breath in him.

He is dead. Bo Jinyan is died.

Jian Yao feels a sudden pain in her heart. Her face is filled with tears. Then she hears coarse voice that says: "Jinyan."

She opens her eyes -

Again, everything around her is blurred. There is that humming sound again.

No, it's just an illusion. She tells herself. She must hold on. But the pain is still vividly felt in her heart. Tears continue to stream down her cheeks....

"Oh... you've had these types of drugs before?.... Such a huge reaction.... You are a good girl." A voice speaks into her ears.

Jian Yao wants to turn her head to look at her him, but it's darkness all around her. She nods subconsciously.

After getting a response from her, he asks gently: "Do you want to clear your head?"

Yes.... She almost said it out loud. But she controls herself not to speak by biting her lower lips. She is biting so hard that she can feel blood in her mouth.

The man laughs.

"You are biting your lips until it's bleeding. That's cute.... But I know, you want to get out of this dreamy state."

Then Jian Yao hears the sound of the door opening.

"I must admit I was a little over-excited last time." He says, "So the patch of skin is a little torn from the whipping. I will have better control this time. Your clothes act as a good barrier. There will not be any permanent scars."

— — — — —

Maryland. John Hopkins Hospital.

Intensive care unit.

Bo Jinyan is standing outside the ward. Behind him stand a lot of people - Chinese officials, FBI agents, Fu Ziyu's family, Yin Ziqi's mother and friends..... etc etc.

The doctor walks out with his diagnostic report. Everyone crowds around him, except for Bo Jinyan. He just stands where he is, and looks at the doctor.

"The bullet in Mr. Fu Ziyu's left chest missed the heart by 3cm. We have successfully removed all the fragments." He explains: "He is a lucky man. He should wake up between 24 to 48 hours."

Everyone feel they could breath easily now. Bo Jinyan looks through the glass windows. He sees his good friend lying on bed, with an oxygen mask over his pale face.

Then the doctor continues: “Ms Yin Ziqi’s knife wound is serious but not life threatening. She is in a stable condition. We expect her to wake up sometime tomorrow morning.”

As everyone starts to thank the doctor, Bo Jinyan quietly walks away. Anam watches him as he walks to the end of the corridor and disappears down the stairs.

— — — — —

Bo Jinyan drives back to the hotel alone.

It’s late at night. And the early winter winds seem to be colder than usual.

There’s no expression on Bo Jinyan’s face. He reaches to his pocket to take out the room key card. He opens the door to their hotel room. The place is dark. But there’s light coming through the windows from the neighbouring office buildings. He turns the lights on, and throws the room key card onto the bed. He takes a look around the room.

They moved into this hotel yesterday. Jian Yao’s luggage is still on a small table next to the bed. The zip is open. He can see a sleeve of one of her shirts hanging out.

There are two pairs of slippers on the floor. A pair of big one next to the small sized pair. A coat of hers is lying on the sofa. It’s a beige colour trench coat that still has her scent on it.

Bo Jinyan stands there for a while. Then he takes off his jacket, pulls off his tie and walks barefooted into the bathroom.

A hot shower is not enough to warm up someone that feels cold in the inside of their body. He stands quietly under the shower head for the water to splash over him.

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After his shower, he stands in front of the window and looks out at the city lights. Then he turns to walk to the bed. He pulls back the duvet and lies down.

He closes his eyes. After a few minutes, he opens them and turns to look at the empty side of the bed. Then he decides to get out of bed. He takes a jacket and wrap it around his back. Then he walks to the next room.

It is set up like a study under Jian Yao's special instructions to the hotel. There's desk and chair, and a whiteboard, so that he can jot down any thoughts that come to him.

He stands in front of the white board. He opens his own suitcase and brings out a stack of documents and photos.

Soon, the white board is full with photos.

He looks at the photos of the past victims. He can visualise what's happening to Jian Yao.

She is treated like an animal, tied with chains. And Xie Han will whip her, and enjoy watching her making desperate but futile escapes from the whip...She will be injected with drugs, so that she cannot differentiate between reality and hallucinations.... The only thing she can feel is pain..... And in a few days, when he cannot be satisfied with whipping and teasing, he will start to cut off pieces of her skin, as his booty. And this might only be the beginning, because he won't let her die so easily.

Because she is Bo Jinyan's woman. She represents his most passionate desires. He will torture her, until there is not a piece of skin, hair, and flesh left on her body. Xie Han wants him to lose her completely.

.....

Bo Jinyan lowers his head and covers his eyes with his hands.

Chapter 76

Losing Jian Yao is something Bo Jinyan will never be able to accept.

The surroundings are quiet. There's blood flowing along the arm, down to the fingertips, then onto the ground.

Jian Yao's face touches the cold concrete floor. She is not moving. There's a burning pain coming from her back and her waist. It feels like her body doesn't belong to her anymore...

But her vision is still blurred. Lights, bed, metal bars, every thing around her are turning into monsters. There are lots of voices speaking at the same time. Her head is so painful it feels like it's going to explode.

"Yao Yao, remember daddy's words. Live with integrity. Do not do anything that goes against your conscience."

"Hey sister. Why are you so nice to the weirdo..."

"Jian Yao, I've never seen him care so much about a girl before."

"Don't you want to kiss me?"

"If you kiss me every five minutes, I will do anything with you. No matter how boring it is to me."

"Now, do you feel it's real?"

— — — — —

Tears stream down her cheeks, down past her cracked lips. Everything tastes salty and bitter. She can't recognise any other tastes anymore. Sweetness? That's a thing of the past.

"Tak... Tak... Tak.." Some footsteps comes close. Jian Yao instinctively curls up like a little vulnerable animal in the corner.

"Why aren't you running anymore?" Xie Han's voice appears from behind. "This is no fun at all. You were still hopping like a rabbit two days ago."

Jian Yao lowers her head. She looks at her hands, which are full of wounds and dried blood. They used to be so soft and smooth. She covers her head with her hands and wait for the whipping that is about to start.

Perhaps he's amused by her slow and futile actions, he laughs.

"Swoosh.." The cracking sound of the whip seems cuts through the air. The familiar burning pain lands harshly on her waist.

Jian Yao feels like she is going to pass out. All her internal organs feels like they are bunched up together.

This endless pain. When is it going to end? What can she do to bring it to an end?

— — — — —

"Ok." A pair of hands carries her and put her gently on the bed.

"Do you want to end this?" He asks softly, as if he can read her mind.

Jian Yao doesn't answer him. Her eyes can't seem to focus. She opens and closes her palm repetitively. This is the only way she can tell herself she is still in control of her own mind. That she is not controlled by him. And she cannot give up.

"Write it down." He says it like a sweet temptation: "Just write down how you feel. If it's not for Bo Jinyan, you will be a happy, ordinary lady. Living a life of a normal person, without having to endure all these pain and suffering."

Xie Han puts a pen into her hand. "Write it down." He gently coaxes her: "Tell him you will leave him. Then it will be all over. No more pain. You will get a new life. I will let you go."

Jian Yao looks at the piece of paper before her. Everything is still a blur. She is in a drowsy state. She can see Xie Han's handsome face smiling at her.

- Just writing one letter... leave Bo Jinyan... this man will let me go?

- Just one letter?

The tip of the pen touches the surface of the paper. She writes down his name -

"Jinyan: "

Her hands and joints are painful from the whipping. She is crying silently. She pauses.

"Why have you stopped?" He asks gently, but his tone sounds a little cold.

Jian Yao lets go of the pen. It falls down onto the bed sheet and the ink from the pen leaks to stain the linen. She lowers her head and wraps her arms and rests it on her arms. Her heart hurts too much to continue.

- No. No matter how much physical pain I am experiencing. I can't write that letter. He is lying to me.

She knows that the moment the letter is written, he will kill her. Because it's not just a letter. It's her suicide note. A suicide note to destroy the love between her and Bo Jinyan - That's his intent all along. He knows how to deliver the biggest blow to Bo Jinyan. And that's more just killing her.

Endure. She has to endure.

She needs to stay alive until they meet again.

Xie Han senses her determination.

A cold hand taps her shoulder. He rubs a part of her skin that is still nicely 'preserved', free from any injury.

"Hadn't I done enough?" He asks softly: "Did I give you the illusion that you can disobey me?"

He spoke with a calm but cold tone. Jian Yao's heart starts to pound.

He is angry.

She can't avoid provoking him after all.

"Hor hor ..." He laughs. It's a terrifying laugh. His fingers that are rubbing her skin increases in strength so Jian Yao's starting to experience pain.

"Let change our strategy." He says: "It's time to give Simon a present."

His hand glides over her shoulders, neck and onto her back.

He rips the fabric at the back of her top. He takes a look at the skin on her back.

“It looks beautiful.” He gives a sigh. “Not even a red mark. Just like I promised you.”

Jian Yao starts to shiver. Tears flows down her face uncontrollably.

— — — — —

Fu Ziyu woke up 48 hours after the operation. It took him one more day before he could start talking.

He is still in the intensive care unit. The doctors are very strict with number of visitors allowed in the ward at one time and the length of visit. After spending some time with his family, a nurse comes to Fu Ziyu . Anam wants to see him.

Although he is quite weak, he agrees to see Anam, because he knows it's something to do with Bo Jinyan.

Bo Jinyan has not appeared once since he woke up. Fu Ziyu knows he is focusing on finding a way to save Jian Yao. That is the absolute priority at the moment.

When he thinks about Jian Yao, his heart aches.

So, why is Anam there to see him?

It's late afternoon. Fu Ziyu lies in bed. He is still very weak and his face looks pale. He smiles at Anam.

It's only been a few days. Anam is usually very tidy and doesn't have much expression on his face. But today, Fu Ziyu can see the stubble on his chin. And the young man looks worried.

“He’s locked himself inside the hotel room for three days.” Anam says: “Nobody is allowed in. He is not taking any phone calls. Nobody knows what he is doing.”

A few sentences. Then the ward is quiet again. Neither of them speaks.

After a long pause, Fu Ziyu asks: “Do... we... have ... any news... on... Jian Yao?”

Anam looks heavy hearted: “No.”

The US is a big place. It’s not easy to locate a missing woman. Especially when she is abducted by a highly intelligent and organised criminal.

All the profiling and analysing on Xie Han has been done prior to Jian Yao’s disappearance. There is nothing much Bo Jinyan can add to the FBI investigations. It’s now the job of the officers to try and track down Xie Han.

“Even a genius in criminal psychology can’t save his own girlfriend.” This is what one of the FBI agents said to Anam: “I think Simon needs time to accept this ... truth.”

Anam is concerned for Bo Jinyan. He has come to see Fu Ziyu because he might be the only person that can help Bo Jinyan get out of that hotel room.

.....

“He... will never accept it.” says Fu Ziyu .

Anam looks at Fu Ziyu . He’s not sure what Fu Ziyu is referring to. He notices that Fu Ziyu looks sad.

He knows his best friend. That straight forward and proud man - to lose Jian Yao... is something that Bo Jinyan will never accept.

Now he is back to his own world. What's in his mind? If Jian Yao is dead, what will become of him?

Fu Ziyu thinks for a while: "I'll....give... him a... call."

Anam nods. He takes his mobile phone for him, then he dials the number and puts the phone to Fu Ziyu's ear.

The phone rings... Anam frowns. It's been a while but no one is answering. But Fu Ziyu looks confident.

"Click." It's connected.

"Jinyan?" Fu Ziyu asks with a coarse voice.

There's silence on the other end for a while, then a voice speaks: "Ziyu,"

Anam sees a shocked expression on Fu Ziyu's face. Fu Ziyu looks up to Anam and says: "Anam... can you please.... leave...for a while?"

Anam nods. He puts the phone on Fu Ziyu's hand and walks to the door. When he is outside, he turns around to close the door. He glances at Fu Ziyu.

Fu Ziyu is still lying down on the bed, with one hand holding the phone. On the pale and handsome face, a tear glides down his face.

This doctor is Bo Jinyan's only friend. The day when he was shot, when his life was in danger, he muttered: "Jian Yao....not able to protect... Jian Yao...". He didn't cry when he was injured and in pain. He didn't shed a tear when the anaesthetic starts to wear off. But when he spoke to his good friend, he cried.

Anam closes the door and waits outside quietly. He doesn't know the real reason why Fu Ziyu cried. It's not only until the case was over did he did find out why he cried that day.

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Marriott hotel Suite.

Bo Jinyan is changed into his black suit. He stands in front of the glass window. The golden glow from the sunset shines on his face. He is holding the mobile phone to his eyes. He looks out of the window into the city that underneath him. There is no expression on his face. Only an icy gaze.

— — — — —

When Jian Yao is awake again, she is lying with her back to the ceiling on a metal frame. She has her clothes on, but her back feels exposed. Her limbs are firmly locked in chains. She can't move her body.

She looks around. The lighting is soft and dim. She is not in her cage anymore. She feels like a fish on a chopping board that is about to be scaled and gutted.

She bites her cracked dried lower lips. A tingling feeling comes to her.

Her brain feels heavy. But she is feeling more alert. Perhaps he's stopped the medication. Is that because he is ready to move to the next phrase - skinning?

Jian Yao's trying to control herself not to sob. But Xie Han realises she is awake. He whistles as he walks toward her.

“Finally, you are awake.” He says. She hears a crisp sound of metals touching. She can guess what’s in his hand. His scalpel and other tools for skinning.

His cold fingertips touches her bare back. He glides over the smooth skin.

“I am about to start.” He whispers in her ear: “But I’ve arranged for some accompaniments. I am sure it will help us to be happier and more excited.”

Jian Yao’s hand holds tightly to the metal frame. She starts to shiver.

What she doesn’t expect is that the ‘accompaniment’ he mentioned is news on Bo Jinyan.

He switches on the the LED screen in front of her.

It’s the news. The presenter is reporting: “Famous criminal psychologist Professor Bo Jinyan’s girl friend Jian Yao has been missing for four days. She’s kidnapped by the Flower Cannibal No.1. Police assures the public that they are doing the best they can to track down suspect Xie Han. And as we can see from behind us... Professor Bo has locked himself in the hotel room for four days. He has been refusing all communication with the outside world...”

Jian Yao’s tears stream down her face.

Her reaction pleases Xie Han. He smiles and walks to her and says in a delighted voice: “The more intelligent a person is, the prouder he will be. When they face adversity, they will completely collapse.”

He turns to her: “You are very important to him. I can’t imagine how much fun there will be when he receives a piece of your skin. The guilt and pain will overwhelm him. He will not be able to forgive himself.”

Xie Han puts one hand on the back of her neck, to stop her shivering. With the scalpel in his other hand, he slowly lowers it onto her back. Jian Yao can feel the cold sharp blade touching her skin....

Jinyan... save me.

Jinyan, save me!

"Breaking news!" The news presenter's voice cuts through the silence. It interrupts Jian Yao's thoughts and Xie Han's actions. They turn to look at the screen. There's images of grass and police offices running taken with a hand held camera.

The presenter speaks: "... We've just got the latest information on Flower Cannibal No.2 Tommy. He's broken out of jail 18 hours ago. FBI and the police refuse to comment on the issue. But we are told a large number of officers are deployed to find him...."

The image shifts back to the presenter in the studio: "... According to inside information, Tommy has written the word 'revenge' with blood on the floor of his cell. Who is he referring to? Is he after Professor Bo Jinyan? Will the two Flower Cannibals reunite? ..."

Jian Yao is dumbfounded. Xie Han throws his tools onto a table. "Oh... Shit!" He swears. A strange smile appears on his face. Then he walks off into the darkness, leaving Jian Yao where she is.

Jian Yao looks around her. Everything is back to its stillness. Deep in her heart, a small glimmer of hope mixes with desperation and hopelessness.

Is that him?

Is that part of his plan?

Or did Tommy really break out of prison? Then he will have one more problem to deal with. They will never meet again...

She keeps watching. There's no more news about Bo Jinyan. She lowers her head and let those big tears flow down her face.

Chapter 77

Simon could be the person that is behind all this.

"Hi Jack. I have a gift for you."

Xie Han is sitting on the sofa. He is reading the "Washington Economic Times". In the classified section, he finds a message. he is overjoyed. He quickly walks down the stairs to the cellar where Jian Yao is.

This is a villa in the countryside of a small town. The house was used as a warehouse during the civil wars. Now it's his little playground.

He hurries downstairs and finds Jian Yao still tied up in the same position where he left her.

"Oh..." He sighs. He puts the newspaper in his hand on the sofa. He releases the locks on her limbs and carry her in his arms.

She coils up into a ball. Her face is as white as a sheet of paper, and her hands and feet are cold. She tries hard not to move at all. She is not sure if she can take any more threats and intimidation. She might collapse.

Xie Han is very gentle. He puts her down on a big comfortable sofa. Then he takes off his suit jacket and places it over her body. He sits down besides her and wraps his hand around her shoulder. He leans over and gives her a kiss on her cheek.

His actions frightens her. She stiffens her body even more. But he doesn't seem to notice her rigidness. He picks up the newspaper and says to her: "Good news and bad news. What do you want to hear first?"

Jian Yao tries hard to control the shake in her voice. She answers softly in a coarse voice: "...bad news."

He smiles and shows her the classified page: "Our little Tommy is back."

Jian Yao looks at the part of the paper he is pointing at. Her heart sinks. This must be the usual way of how they communicate to each other. It's obviously a secret between the two of them. Others have no way of knowing or imitating it.

Jinyan... you have enemies in front and behind you at the same time?

What are you going to do?

Xie Han knows what is going through her mind. He says with a smile: "Don't be discouraged. I have not shared the good news yet." He throws the newspaper onto the coffee table. Then he leans back onto the sofa again. Jian Yao doesn't dare to move, not even a tiny bit. She waits for him to speak.

"The good news is..." he says slowly: "Simon might be behind all this."

Jian Yao is startled by his comment. Xie Han continues: "Tommy cannot defeat Simon. Perhaps he thinks he's escaped, but Simon is watching his every move. That's possible too."

He picks up her hand. He examines and admires his own handy work for a while. Then he says: "Relax. Do you know what I am going to do next?"

Jian Yao keeps quiet.

He laughs: "I am not going to reply. No matter what happens to Tommy, they won't get a word out of me. Simon takes a risky step, but his efforts will be futile. What a waste."

— — — — —

After 'sharing' the news with her, he sits at the sofa to watch a bit more television. Then, like a gentleman, he says good night to Jian Yao and leaves.

Jian Yao hears the noise of a closing door from a distance. She is still sitting on the sofa. He must be really happy. He forgot to lock her back in the cage.

But it doesn't make much difference.

Jian Yao picks up a box of tissues from the coffee table. She walks over to the sink and starts to rinse the dried blood off her wounds. A round of pain comes over her. She is used to it. She looks into the mirror. She sees a woman that is pale and thin. Is that her?

Just like Xie Han, she wonders what's Bo Jinyan's next move. She knows that he has successfully aroused his curiosity. At least for now - Xie Han's attention is on Tommy. He seems to have lost interest in torturing and skinning her.

But Jinyan, what are you going to do next? How long can you keep his attention?

— — — — —

Xie Han sits at his desk. He is searching the internet on all the latest news on Tommy. Then he leans back and looks at the fields outside the window.

His goal is to win Bo Jinyan over. Someone that is as superior and proud as him. The only person in the world that is worthy to be his partner. They have had a few rounds of contests. Sometimes he wins, sometimes Bo Jinyan wins. He is more sure than ever that he made the right decision. Bo Jinyan is his own match.

To get Bo Jinyan, the first thing he has to do is to crush him. Lead him to the lowest point of his life. Wait until he is most vulnerable... then he can capture him.

He is very confident Bo Jinyan will eventually submit to him. Because they are very similar people. People with the same nature. Oh... angels and demons, it's a fine line between the two. Once the demon in Bo Jinyan's heart is awakened, they will be together, forever.

As for Jian Yao.... she is disrupting his plans. The more he thinks about it, the 'present' of a piece of her skin will not be enough. He needs a bigger blow. Bo Jinyan needs to receive the suicide note. A note that contains all her regrets, pains and sufferings. This is the weapon Xie Han needs to send him to hell.

However, this woman's tenacity is more than he had expected. It's almost one week. Even under the influence of drugs, she refuses to write a suicide note. He is losing interest in torturing her. And he knows in his heart. Even if he peels off her skin, she will not lift the pen. This quality reminds him of Bo Jinyan, and Li Xunran. Stubborn and headstrong. He admires this. It makes him a little reluctant to kill her...

But anyway... something else intrigues him now.

He looks at the newspaper classified ad again. His eyes lands on the word 'present'.

He knows exactly what Tommy means by 'present' - Tommy is jealous of Bo Jinyan. He wants to kill Bo Jinyan and give it to Xie Han as a present.

Tommy worships and loves his mentor. He cannot tolerate his position being replaced by Bo Jinyan. If he gets rid of Bo Jinyan, then he will still be Xie Han's only partner.

Xie Han laughs out loud.

Tommy... Tommy... you are no match for Bo Jinyan. You are doomed.

However, it's an interesting twist to the game. How exciting.

He can rest for a while and watch the two of them fight each other.

— — — — —

Two days later. Early morning.

Xie Han is sitting at the dining table, having breakfast. He is holding today's "Washington Economic Times".

After breakfast, he turns to the classified section. As he expected, Tommy has contacted him again.

"My dear. I am still your only friend." Xie Han works backwards. This message is printed more than 8 hours ago. That means at the time, Tommy is still free - or least he considers himself to be.

Xie Han smiles. He puts aside the paper. There's a pile of newspaper on the desk. Everyday, Tommy sends him a message.

Oh...Simon, Tommy, without any reply from me... are you both disappointed?

He sits back on the sofa. He switches on the TV and watches the news.

Economic summit meeting, presidential voting trends, a hurricane that is sweeping through Louisiana.... This world is so dull and boring. He turns on the surveillance camera images. In his underground playground, Jian Yao is quiet as a cat, curled up in the sofa.

Xie Han smiles. As he picks up a glass of red wine, the voice of the news presenter on television catches his attention: "We have the latest news on the flower cannibal case...."

"Breaking news: The flower cannibal has sent the TV station a secret parcel."

A parcel?

What is this all about?

What happened next took him completely by surprise.

Xie Han puts down his glass. He fixes his eyes on the screen. The news presenter looks more serious than usual. She says with a clear voice: "We received a parcel from Tommy, the flower cannibal no.2 ten minutes ago. It's dispatched from the Pelican Bay prison. This is a USB stick with a video footage. Please be warned. What you are about to see is disturbing and brings great shame to the whole of the United States, FBI, and the US and Chinese police."

She pauses for a while, then she continues: "This footage is from two years ago. The person in the video is the consultant for the Chinese police, an ex-analyst for the FBI, the famous Maryland University Professor - Bo Jinyan. Simon."

Chapter 78

A few days later, Jian Yao is rescued by the FBI from the devils' den. When she looked back at the experience, she remembers the immense pain she suffered both physically and psychologically. But she is also amazed how life can be so much like an unpredictable plot of a novel.

Nobody, except for the person who planned the moves, expected how the events would played out.

Let's take the story from where it all started - the video footage that was sent to the TV station by Tommy. A secret footage that nobody else knew existed, except for Tommy, Xie Han... and him.

.....

Afternoon, In the underground cellar.

It's hard to tell the time of the day when there's no natural light coming through. Jian Yao is sitting on the sofa. She watches as Xie Han arranges the fresh flowers and places the candles on the dining table.

She can tell he is in an extremely good mood. Every word, every action. He is like a well mannered gentleman. He even gave her a nice bunch of yellow daisies.

Jian Yao feels as if every cell in her body is withering, like a plant that is about to die. Xie Han takes a look at her and sits facing her on the other side of the table.

"Bon appetite." He says with a smile.

Jian Yao picks up the chopsticks. As they touch the white rice in the bowl, she hears Xie Han makes a "Oh" sound. Her hand shakes and the chopsticks fall onto the tablecloth.

Xie Han stares at her: "I have not introduced tonight's entertainment. We are about to see another video about Simon. Are you happy about that?"

Jian Yao has an uneasy feeling about this. She keeps quiet.

Xie Han stands up and walks over to her. This movement sends chills to her spine. He casually place his hand on her shoulder, and says softly: "I know that you are woman with depth and good character. I am honoured to share my feelings with you."

He starts to converse with her! Like Bo Jinyan says, he is an unpredictable and moody man.

"People say, ants can overcome elephants. Even an insignificant pawn can completely change the course of an event. I didn't expect our little Tommy to give me such a big surprise! I am amazed."

Jian Yao is getting more and more afraid. Her whole head starts to hurt.

He continues: "I didn't know he kept the footage. And to send it out at this time... I understand why he is doing this. Once this is broadcasted, Bo Jinyan's reputation will be completely ruined. This is his present for me. He seems to think that by destroying Bo Jinyan, Bo Jinyan will be of no interest to me anymore.

I can only say Tommy underestimates Bo Jinyan, and he underestimates me - This is exactly what I wished for - to put Bo Jinyan to destruction, is to push him towards me."

Jian Yao sits very still. Her heart is sore. Jinyan, what's happening to you?

He smiles at her: "You don't understand what I am talking about?"

Jian Yao bits her lower lip. She is not answering him.

Xie Han laughs. He picks up the bunch of yellow daisies and put it to his nose for a sniff: "Let's just say that Simon has a secret.... a secret that was revealed two years ago. Only I know about it, Tommy knows about it. And Simon... does not."

So Bo Jinyan has made a fatal mistake. Using Tommy as a bait as allowed him to reveal this secret to the rest of the world. Bo Jinyan's plan backfired. What is about to happen is going to be out of Bo Jinyan's control."

Jian Yao is confused and worried. A secret? Bo Jinyan has a secret? That's impossible. Is this another trick Xie Han is using on her? It must be.

She must stay sober. Stay in control.

Xie Han presses the play button on the remote. He says with a dreamy voice: "Enjoy. This is what I am after. This is what I have been waiting for. It's a time for fiesta and celebration for serial killers around the world."

Even though she keeps telling herself this is just a trick of his, she can't help but tense up. She is afraid to see what's on the video.

— — — — —

A small room. A prison cell with a lonely light bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling, and a rectangular desk.

A man is sitting in front of the video camera. He is bare chested. There are rows of cuts on his back. Jian Yao recognises him at first glance. It's Bo Jinyan. His hands and feet are tied to chains. Obviously, he is imprisoned.

He lifts his head.

The familiar handsome face that she knows too well. But he is a lot thinner here. And his hair is much longer too.

But this Bo Jinyan is somewhat different from the man that she loves.

It's his expressions!

Callous. Cruel. His eyes looks looks cold and uncaring.

Why is that?

Then he picks up a little knife on the table. He licks off the blood with his tongue. Then he speaks: "Tommy."

Jian Yao's heart shivers.

What happened to his voice? Why... why does he sound... so different?

Tommy is probably outside of the range of the camera lens. Bo Jinyan has an devilish smile on his face.

"I'm not that stupid guy, Simon." He is holding the dagger in his hand. He plays with it like a skilful hunter: "I am Allen."

Suddenly, Jian Yao can hear a buzzing sound in her brain. There is no sound other than Bo Jinyan's voice. Her heart feels like it's being shredded into pieces.

The same man. But with a different expression and a different voice. Usually, Bo Jinyan's voice is deep and low, but this voice sounds very husky, and a bit brighter than his normal voice. It sounds like it's from a completely different person. Even the accent he speaks is different.

How is this possible?

A second personality.... Allen?

In the images, where Bo Jinyan refers to himself as 'Allen', smiles and says: "I have killed more people than you."

"Don't drag me into this immature game of yours."

"If you can completely kill off Simon's consciousness so I can have this body all to myself, I'll join you."

— — — — —

The video footage went viral. It's broadcasted on very major television channel in the US. And it's all over the internet.

As the news presenter has predicted, it shocked the whole of the US. Everyone needs time to digest this piece of information - Angel and demon... it's the same person.

Allen even admitted to some murders that he committed over the years. These were unsolved mysteries. He even told Tommy the details of how he went about committing those crimes.

.....

FBI Analyst Office.

Everyone looking at the television live broadcast is in shock. They can't believe the man in the video is the same man they used to work with. Someone mutters: "Shit!"

In the Maryland Hospital, Fu Ziyu is lying in bed. He watched the broadcast on his laptop. Tears starts to trickle. He keeps very

quiet. Anam is standing beside his bed. He is nonplussed by the news. He is so shocked he is rooted to the spot.

The family members of the victims that Bo Jinyan claimed to have killed look at the TV in disbelief and anger.

At the same time, countless reporters gathering in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel, where Bo Jinyan is staying. The hotel security and police stops them from getting to Bo Jinyan's room. A lot of them goes outside and point their camera towards the window of Bo Jinyan's room.

A tall man appears before the window. He partly open the curtains so that he takes a look at the crowd that's gathered on the ground. Then he closes the curtains, and disappears from the crowd's gaze.

The broadcast is over. Jian Yao sits on the chair with her body shaking. She doesn't know what to believe.

Xie Han is well pleased with her reactions. He takes up his chopsticks and enjoys his meal.

"You are surprised?" He says: "I don't blame you. Even Simon himself don't know that Allen exist. You are only his girl friend, how would you know."

Jian Yao's is speechless.

Xie Han looks at her. then he smiles. He picks up a slice of beef and put it into her bowl: "Actually, it's not hard to understand why he has split personality. Did Simon ever tell you how his mother died? His father killed her in a villa and used cement to hide her body in a wall. Allen remembers it. But Simon has forgotten. They are the same person, with different sets of personality and memories.

I bet he never told you what happened when he was captured by Tommy. They are too painful to bear, even for Simon. He's not as strong as you think he is, that's why he's split into two persons.

Let me think.... what else? Does he suffer from insomnia and walk around the house at night?"

He continues: "That's Allen. He's just hiding himself from Simon."

Jian Yao's heart aches. Her head starts to spin. She supports her forehead with her hands as her dizziness makes her feel like she is going to faint. From the corners of her eyes, she notices Xie Han looking at the TV screen, and with an extremely contented tone, he murmurs: "Hi Allen. You have returned... finally... My greatest friend."

Side Story – Allen

He opens his eyes. The room is pitched dark. He is lying down still. Gliding his fingers down along the side of his body, he realises he is on a bed, smooth and soft. It even smells fresh and clean.

Bo Jinyan gives a faint smile.

This is the first day he is kidnapped. The Flower Cannibal seems to be treating him well.

After pausing for a while, he stands up. His slender figure seems to be melting into the darkness. Like a solitary tree standing alone in a cold dark night.

In the same room. In one of the corners. A man is staring at him with interest. A pair of blue eyes spark with excitement, like a falcon eyeing his prey.

- Hi Simon.

- You belong to me. Finally.

Ten minutes later.

Suddenly all the lights are turned on. Bo Jinyan instinctively covers his eyes with his hands. When he got adjusted to the brightness, he looks around. A narrow room. Hanging light. A blond man standing in the corner. Behind him is a cage. There are other victims in there. They curl up in the corner of the cage, like ants curling their bodies before their moment of death.

- Hi, Tommy.

- We meet in person. Finally. And I am about to be the food in your plate.

Nobody spoke. They are just looking into each other's eyes. Tommy keeps a smile on his face. Bo Jinyan..... takes his eyes off his rival. Without the slightest change of expression, he looks at his surroundings again. Then, with a smile filled with disgust, he sits down on the bed.

"How does it feel?" Tommy speaks to Bo Jinyan like he's an old friend of his.

Not looking in his direction, Bo Jinyan gives a faint smile, in his usual supercilious way.

Tommy smiles, showing his white teeth: "You're mad."

He falls to his hands, but it seems he fails to see who is in control here.

Turning toward Tommy, Bo Jinyan says in an indifference tone: "Oh, what should I do? Should I be celebrating the fact that I am the most intelligent man that you will have eaten in your life?"

Puzzled by what he said, Tommy looks up: "What?"

He walks out.

In a different room.

"Tommy."

Xie Han stands up. His eyes are still staring at a monitor screen: "it seems the two of you are not getting along."

Tommy grunts. He walks over to the refrigerator, takes out a dish with some meat in it and starts eating. As if he has been revived, he smacks his lips and smiles again.

Han Xie is familiar with this scene. "He's been here for half an hour, talked to you no more than three times, but every word makes you angry - Do you know why he is able to do that?"

Tommy lifts his eye towards him.

Xie Han smiles: "Because both of you are aware - he is different from your other preys, he is invulnerable, you can't break him. You don't know what to do."

Tommy loosens the tie around his neck: "That is not true." He stares at Han Xie. He has a cold and stubborn look on his face: "Starting tonight, we'll deal with him with mind control technique plus your drugs. We will have some fun."

Xie Han lights a cigarette, slowly sucks a few mouthfuls and passes it to Tommy. Han Xie smiles: "These tactics are useless to him, besides" His eyes glance at the man on screen - this time Bo Jinyan

has closed his eyes, lying back on the bed, without a trace of nervousness in him.

"Besides what?"

"These tactics are desecrating for someone like him."

Tommy's heart feels like it's been pricked by a needle.

What the Does Xie Han think that Bo Jinyan is a god ?

Hiding his feelings, Ty asks causally: "So, what do you suggest?"

All the hassles just to catch this man. Now he's in our hand. But how do we tame him?

"Grind slowly." Xie Han replies.

-

The first time Bo Jinyan cut human flesh, is three days later.

Threatening him into submission is more simple than Tommy has expected, a woman and a baby is thrown in front of him, together with a selection criteria: "You will decide the life and death of this baby. Do as I say, and I will let this baby go."

Bo Jinyan takes a look at him. He picks up the scalpel, and walks towards the woman who is tied up. Tommy sits down and looks at him in silence. The baby is sound asleep, oblivious to what's happening around him. The woman shrills screams that fills the room.

When the first booty is thrown into the tray, Tommy emerges with grin: "Maybe I am lying to you. Maybe I'm just teasing you, both of these people, in fact, will not survive. How can you not think of this ? Smart guy."

Bo Jinyan answers contemptuously. "Whether you are lying is your business, whether I choose to give up hope for a life is mine."

Tommy no longer speaks.

He knows. The longer he stays with Bo Jinyan, the more frustrated he will be. Yet the boss does not allow him to torture or eat him.

From that day, cutting human flesh becomes one of Bo Jinyan daily routines. He can see the fear and hatred inside the eyes of these victims. Bo Jinyan never speaks to them, because he can't explain himself to them. He knows that his life is safe at the moment, and as long as he is unharmed, these people will have a higher chance of surviving. But how many of them will be able to escape from here? He is not sure.

But the person hiding behind the video camera Tommy, has different views.

Tommy says to Xie Han: "We should not waste any more time on him. Cutting human flesh everyday does not seem to bother him. There has been no progress. Just kill him. We don't need him, we have each other. We are partners, right?"

Han Xie is carrying a small dish with the flesh Bo Jinyan harvested today. Hearing Tommy's words, he laughs: "Who says there is no progress?"

Tommy looks at the dish. With appreciation for his skills, he says: "Despite the things he says, he's turning into a professional with the scalpel."

Xie Han picks up a piece of meat with a knife, examines it closely under a lamp. He gives a satisfying smile.

A person in law enforcement, a crime-fighting expert, has become an abuser of the weak and innocent. Tommy can only see his scalpels skills, but he can see the devil that's hiding in Bo Jinyan's body.

What they fail to see, is that Bo Jinyan is turning their temptation for him into a trap for themselves.

-

Han Xie's second phase of the program is to make Bo Jinyan eat raw human flesh, together with physical torture.

Abuse, both mental and physical, can break any man's will, no matter how strong. And eventually, he'll surrender, even fall in love with the feeling of being abused, or abusing other.

Because within every one of us lives a hidden demon, Bo Jinyan is no exception.

So it is the routine - every night, Tommy brings a plate with red meat to Jinyan and tell him it's beef: "I like it raw." Tommy says and passes to him. Bo Jinyan will thank him, then eats all of it as if he believes the meat is actually beef.

Then, Tommy will walk around to his already heavily bruised and wounded back, find a place that is unharmed, and stabs him. Then he will collect the thick blood that runs down his back with a tall glass tightly pressing above his tailbone. Tommy has obsessive-compulsive disorder. The wounds on Bo Jinyan's back are very evenly spaced and symmetrical. Han Xie likes his tidy workmanship.

Every night, Han Xie looks into the camera. He sees Bo Jinyan's scarred and etched back. He eagerly waits for the birth of a new man. And now, Tommy sits beside him, slowly drinks the cup of blood and sweat mixed with some meat residue from the stabs. He offers it to Han Xie, who shakes his head and declines. "This is disgusting."

Tommy laughs.

-

For Bo Jinyan, time seems to be standing still.

In his dark and narrow cell, as time passes by silently, more and more people are no longer there. You just do not know when the lights will be turned on suddenly and Tommy will come in. No one dares to make a sound in this heavy darkness.

Sometimes, he will keep his eyes open for a long time, even though all he sees is nothing but a deep black surrounding him. Even when he is extremely tired, he can't fall asleep as easily as before.

This year, he is twenty-four years old.

And thousands of miles away across the Atlantic, Jian Yao enter university this same year, living a simple and safe life.

-

Events finally takes a turn after his fourth month of captivity.

There is a fire around midnight. Nobody knows the cause of it. When Tommy is aware of the blaze, smoke and flames have surrounded the cellar. Han Xie is not there at the time.

Later, when Tommy is in prison, when he thinks about the fire, he reckons it is one of Bo Jinyan's tricks, that he used it to try and escape but failed. Xie Han, though, believes that this is just a bad short-circuit accident.

Nevertheless, the fire, is where everything started.

That night, the fire is fierce. Tommy cannot get close to the cellar entrance. People inside are burned by the scorching iron that's become very hot due to the fire outside of the cellar. Hot water vapours dripping from ceiling scald their skins. There's screaming everywhere.

Bo Jinyan wraps himself in a blanket, and waited. Finally, the metal bars of the cage starts to warp and melt and a gap big enough to fit through a person emerges. Bo Jinyan takes the opportunity and gets out of the cage.

(Note from TB: Is this possible? if it's so hot, all of them should be dead by now, right??)

The cellar is in chaos. Women, the elderly, children, and several young men are all trying to get away, pushing one another. But their freedom is short lived. Tommy shoots each one in the head as they run out of the entrance of the cellar. After a while, the bodies blocks the entrance and no one can pass through anymore.

That night, Bo Jinyan understood two things.

1. Tommy wants to kill him.
2. The cellar is located close to ground level, perhaps only separated by a wall.

"Come with me. I will help you escape." He tells the crowd. Everyone is scared. They turn around to see this young man.

He has not spoken to them once in the last four months. He is one of those who tortured them, yet he himself is imprisoned with them.

"Why? Why should we believe you?"

"Kill him, kill him. He's one of them"

.....

Everyone is in panic. Bo Jinyan frowns. He starts to walk without a moment's delay.

"Why should you believe me?" He lightly replied, "Because you have no other choice."

Most of the people are skeptical. But really, like he said, there is no other choice, so they follow him.

"We've kept ourselves alive for this long. Let's not lose anymore lives." He said.

A woman hears these words, and immediately tears come to her eyes.

Bo Jinyan leads the way. Others follow. He leads them through to a different room of the cellar. In front of them is a wall that is partially collapsed. They can see a small hole with light coming through.

Even though it's only a small hole, they see half a slice of ink blue sky, and the moon that illuminates the grass.

Can we finally escape from this hell? And live to tell the tale?

People are starting to push each other away to get ahead. This time, Bo Jinyan gains control of the situation: "Women and children will go out first, I will follow after."

One, two, three Bo Jinyan stands at the end of the queue. He counts silently. Occasionally, he will look up and see a wall above the bright moonlight jade.

Seven, eight, nine

Then Bo Jinyan hears footsteps and gun shots. Unfortunately, Tommy has found some of them. He hopes that some of the people will be able to escape from Tommy and run to safety.

Twelve, last one.

As Bo Jinyan helps to push the last man up the hole, he positions his body so he can be pulled out of the hole.

A hand is extended toward Bo Jinyan to put him out.

Bo Jinyan smiles, and reaches out to the hand.

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As half of a metal rod is inserted into him, sharp pain rips through his chest. He looks down, and he sees his blood spreading.

A man screaming in pain. "I know it..... You are one of them. This is just another sadistic game of yours. I will kill you first. I will kill you first!!"

.....

In extreme pain, Bo Jinyan closes his eyes, and opens them. He sees the moonlight. He smells the grass. Then he hears a man laughing insanely, and other panic voices: "What are you doing? He saved us!"

Everything starts to spin around him. He feels his body fall, back into the cellar that has been roasted too hot by the heavy flames coming from all sides....

Before he loses consciousness, he says to himself. The man, whom he has rescued, is suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder.

He was in a coma for a few days. He knew he had a high temperature. His forehead, throat, eyes felt as if there were ten million needles poking him.

He kept dreaming.

He dreamt about going fishing with his mother during his childhood days. Then when his mother died, his father locked himself in the empty house, and lived like a dead sculpture.

He also dreamt about his first encounter with Fu Ziyu - the boyfriend of a serial murder victim. Fu Ziyu was standing at the corner of the school library, smiling at him.

Then, he dreamed of the scene before the coma - the man he saved, picked up a piece of metal bar, turned back and stabbed him in the chest.

.....

"What is the purpose of life? You think you are risking your life to save others? But is there any value to it?"

"Those mediocre beings whom you saved, does anyone of them really know you?"

A voice whispers into his ear.

Bo Jinyan wakes up.

He opens his eyes to see the cellar and find it a very different environment. Silver ceiling, new cages and new rooms.

Only he is left in the cellar, still lying in his bed. He has no idea what has happened to the rest of the prisoners.

His lips forms the sarcastic smile. He raises his hand to touch his forehead. The fever has broken.

He stands up slowly.

Behind the monitor, Han Xie is looking at his face, stunned.

Bo Jinyan still has those slender beautiful eyes, yet they look different.

His eyes scans the cell, stopping at the camera lens. It is as if Bo Jinyan is looking at Xie Han face to face, staring into his eyes. Xie Han's heart starts to pound.

Then he hears a strange, unfamiliar sound. A sound that he's been waiting for.

"Hello, precious. As you wish, I am awake."

Chapter 79

Darkness surrounds her. Jian Yao lies down in the small bed. It seems she is only person left in the world.

She touches the bed sheets underneath her body. Xie Han changed a new set of bed sheets for her today. It smells freshly laundered. But this smells reminds her of home.

She misses her mother. She misses her sister. She misses Xunran, and she misses Bo Jinyan most.

In this place where there's no way of differentiating whether it is night or day.... Where are you... my love?

Before Xie Han left her, he injected some drugs into her. Her arm is full of needle holes.

But it didn't produce hallucinations like the previous drugs. Instead, memories comes flooding to her. Sweet memories, bitter memories... they just appear in her mind uncontrollably.

The night when she touched Bo Jinyan's scars on his back for the first time. Her tears swelled up in her eyes. What did he say to her then?

Under the gentle and soft lighting, his handsome but proud face looks at her with regret and concern: "If I knew this would make you cry, I would not have shown you."

His rich low voice, sounding like beautiful music notes played by a cello, rings in her ears. His warm breath, his sensual touch, filled with love and his adoration for her.... Jian Yao falls into a dreamy fantasy where he is beside her, wrapping his arms tightly around her...

Suddenly, a big vacuum sucked away her lover. Then, the voice of another man rings in her ears: "I will be the one that live. The one and only... Allen."

No!

Jian Yao puts her hands over her face.

No. She does not believe it. Bo Jinyan cannot have split personality. He is strong and tough. Even though he is walking in darkness, his heart is still pure and clear.

Her Bo Jinyan. the one and only... Simon. No matter what she hears. No matter what happens next. There is only one thing she can do

-

Believe in him. Wait for him.

He will unlock this hell and rescue her.

— — — — —

“Pang!” The sound of the light switch being turned on. The blinding light causes Jian Yao to cover her eyes with her hands. She hears a familiar footage behind her.

Jian Yao’s heart pounds.

He, is here again.

— — — — —

There is smell of coffee in the air. Jian Yao is forced out of her cage back to the sofa again.

Xie Han is still in a good mood. He’s whistling again. He brings over a cup of coffee and put it in front of her.

Jian Yao’s face is very pale. She doesn’t pick up the cup. Xie Han gets himself another cup of coffee. He takes a sip, then he smiles: “Drink it. Or I will whip you.”

Jian Yao takes the coffee and sips it slowly. He smiles.

After she has drinks about a third of the cup, he suddenly says: “Oh... I forgot to tell you, I added something special in the coffee.”

Jian Yao pauses. She looks at the cannibal that is sitting before her. A disgusting thought comes to her mind. She starts throwing up into the rubbish bin next to her feet.

Xie Han laughs loudly: “What I wanted to tell you was... I added milk in the coffee.”

Jian Yao takes a deep breath. She takes a tissue from the table and wipes her mouth. Then she looks up and meets his gaze. She quickly looks down again.

Bo Jinyan is right. He has an unstable and anti-social personality.

At the moment, he is in a good mood, making fun of her. But he might change his mind and want to kill her a few minutes later. He's so unpredictable.

God, please protect me from this monster. I must live to the day Jinyan comes for me. Just don't upset him.

With this thought, She quietly sits and observes what's his plans are today.

He sits beside her, throws today's newspaper on the coffee table and turns on the TV.

Jian Yao quickly glances at the newspaper. It's the classified section. There's an ad that says: "Jack, do you like my present?"

It's a message from Tommy.

Her heart swells and trembles with bitterness. She looks up at the TV screen. It's news time.

The same news presenter from yesterday brings more news on Bo Jinyan. Her clear and calm voice pierces Jian Yao like a sword: "Both the Chinese government and the FBI refuse to comment on the 'Bo Jinyan case'. This has upset a lot of family members of the victims. This morning, more than 200 people gathered outside the FBI headquarters in Washington to protest. They are petitioning for the arrest of Professor Bo Jinyan. We have news that a few families have appointed the

famous litigators from Davis Law Firm. They will be suing Professor Bo...”

“A lot of people believe that he has split personality.” Xie Han sips his coffee again. “What about you?”

Jian Yao keeps quiet.

Xie Han looks at her coldly.

Jian Yao clenches her hands that’s resting on her knees.
Does he believe?

How should she answer him without provoking him?

Jinyan, what should I say?

— — — — —

“I don’t believe it.” Jian Yao says softly: “He is not like that.”

Her voice is soft and coarse, but there’s trust and faith in her voice.

Xie Han laughs again. But he didn’t comment.

They continue to watch the television.

It’s a building that Jian Yao recognises. it’s the hotel she stayed in before being kidnapped. This is also the place where Bo Jinyan has isolated himself from the rest of the world for a few days now.

“Oh...” Xie Han sits straighter on the sofa. They can hear the news presenter’s voice: “Breaking new. Our reporter brings you the latest developments from the Marriott hotel. The FBI has arrived, and Professor Bo Jinyan has finally left the hotel room.”

Then Jian Yao's body is numbed. Because for the first times in days, she sees Bo Jinyan. The man that she misses so much!

He is surrounded by a big group of FBI agents. He is wearing a tidy black suit, with a simple shirt. No tie. He looks calm and calm. As the camera flashes, he turns around. Inside his dark eyes, there's a coldness that is enough to freeze you with just a glance.

Tears streams uncontrollably down her face. Her vision is blurred. She tries to wipe the tears, but it just keeps flowing.

"Tears of desolation. Your subconsciousness believes he has split personality." He smiles.

No. She does not believe. She says in her heart. Never. Bo Jinyan does not have split personality. He is trying to mislead her.

"If Bo Jinyan's girlfriend confirms in a letter to the public that he has split personality..." He takes out a syringe from the drawer and walks towards her: "That would make things even more interesting,"

Jian Yao can only watch him inject more drugs into her. A coldness runs through her veins.

Another run of mental control and manipulation. How long can she defend her position?

— — — — —

It's been a few long and painful days for many people.

Anam lives in the same hotel as Bo Jinyan. He wakes early in the morning.

It's been two days since Bo Jinyan has been taken away by the FBI. On his computer, he can see the surveillance images of the FBI

headquarters' various entrances, stairways, interrogation rooms, and the temporary detention cell for Bo Jinyan.

Everything is as per normal. Bo Jinyan is lying straight as a pole on the single bed. He is separated with the guards by the rows of metal bars. The guards are walking up and down the corridor.

Anam stares at the screen for a while. Bo Jinyan looks tired and gaunt. There are bags under his eyes. He has lost weight.

Anam switches on the TV. It's a morning filled with controversy. There's more and more pressure from the media to press charges against Bo Jinyan; but they cannot underestimate the voice of support for Bo Jinyan:

The most renowned Criminal psychology professor in Maryland has publicly expressed his support for his most beloved student. He claims that even if there is another personality in him, as long as the primary personality Simon has no knowledge of the second personality's actions, he is not guilty.

Other people whom he's saved marched with their families to show their support. They urge the FBI to find out the truth behind the allegations....“How can anyone doubt his integrity when he has given himself so selflessly to save the life of others?”

China has requested to transfer Bo Jinyan to China for further investigations. However, the US has not responded to the Chinese's request.

....

Anam walks out of his hotel room after he's seen the news.

— — — — —

One hour later. In the FBI headquarters interrogation room.

Anam is sitting at one end of the table. Facing him is the man that everyone is discussing lately - Bo Jinyan. Two days of detention has not caused him to change very much. He looks more or less the same as when he first stepped into this building two days ago.

Anam speaks first: "There's chaos everywhere."

Bo Jinyan nods.

Anam lowers his voice: "What should we do now?"

Bo Jinyan looks at him, but he does not answer.

Two days later. In Jian Yao's cell.

She does not know when the lights were dimmed. Her vision is blurred. Her head is hurting. Jian Yao is lying on the floor, with a sheet of paper and a pen in front of her.

Xie Han bends down and talks to her as a close friend: "Now you know. He has split personality. Do you still love him?"

She is under the influence of drugs. Everything seems to be spinning around her. She lifts her head towards Xie Han's direction: "Yes, I still love him."

She is finding it hard to differentiate between reality and illusions. The handsome and gentle man. The blood thirsty killer. And how many people are there with her in that dimly lit cell. One? Two? Is Xie Han? Allen? Both of them? She is so confused. Or perhaps it's all just a dream... a bad dream.

But whatever it is, it's too painful.

"Write it down. Tell him everything." Xie Han sounds more gentle than he's ever been: "Don't you want him to know how much you love him? Tell him before you die. That even the world cannot accept his split personality, you will not abandon him..."

Jian Yao looks at him. She focuses her gaze onto his face.

Finally, she reaches out for the pen.

— — — — —

"Jinyan:

When I was young, I dreamt that one day, I will grow up to be someone like my father - to maintain justice, even if it costs me my life.

Then, I settled for a more ordinary life. I went to school, I grew up and I started work. I thought I walked further and further away from that dream. It's a regret that I hid deep inside my heart.

Then, I met you.

My dream.

I never said this to you aloud. I love you. But I've said it many times in my heart. Every morning when I see you sleeping beside me, every time when I am amazed by your talent, when you put aside your own safety to help those who need you... I tell myself. I am so lucky to have you.

You deserve my love.

But perhaps, I can't accompany you anymore. I can't endure it anymore. I am stuck in darkness without an exit. Every morning, I hope to wake up and find you here, to rescue me, to feel your warm embrace, so that we will never part again.

I am sorry Jinyan. I can't accompany you anymore. Don't be sad. There's a lot of people in this world that love you. They will take my place to love you. You will not be lonely in your journey ahead. Live a good life.

I am not sad at all. Really. Because you once belonged to me. Even as I am facing death, my heart is at peace. This is a release for me. Even if I am turned to dust and ashes, I will not forget you. From now on, every sunrise, every sunset, every night, I will hope that I can still meet you and love you in my next life. We will return to the place we met, and I will tell you, personally, how much I love you.

.....

Jinyan, I am sorry. I doubted you. Whenever we were confronted by the perverted killers, when you were the only person that understood them, I was afraid. I feared that one day, you too, will be swallowed up into that darkness. Then, I saw the footage of Allen. Surprisingly, I felt more settled in my heart.

It's not important. Jinyan. Simon or Allen. It's not important. You are who you are. My only Jinyan. My love for you will never change, because I believe, you will conquer Allen, conquer Xie Han. You will find me, and bring me away from this hell.

Then, we will return to our hometown. We will return to our house. Please embrace me, even if it's only my ashes, and sit by the river. Accompany me to watch the sunrise and the sunset. Then, bury me in a place where you can see me everyday.

Do you remember the first time we held hands? We are both stunned. You said I was tickling you. But the truth is, you've never held any other girls' hand before.... So what if I die? We have too many memories together. They will accompany me till I die. I have achieved my dream. I have you. I've met my parent's expectations. I have become someone they wanted me to be. We have solved many cases together. I have no regrets. The only regret I have is that I can no longer accompany you on your life journey.

Please do not be alone. Bo Jinyan. Do not be alone. Live everyday well.

Because I am here. Jinyan. In your eyes. In your heart and in your life.

We will never part from each other.

Jian Yao."

— — — — —

The next morning.

Anam takes the letter to the FBI headquarters.

A night of quietness. As if he is expecting something, Bo Jinyan is sitting at the table. Anam puts the letter on the table and slides it on him.

Bo Jinyan does not pick it up. Instead, he reads the letter line by line carefully and slowly.

Anam is quiet. He is observing the expressions on his face.

After a long time, Bo Jinyan lifts his head to look at him. But it's like he is looking through him, and through the cement walls, to the place where she is.

A smile appears on his face. However, his eyes still looks cold and empty.

A coarse and unfamiliar voice speaks. "I need to break out of here."

Chapter 80

Candlelight, music, wine. But this is only a false picture of harmony and calmness.

Jian Yao sits on the sofa. She is holding a wine glass, quiet as a mouse. Xie Han is sitting next to her. They are watching TV together.

The same news presenter that they've seen many times for the past few days speaks: "This is a touching letter. We have invited the famous criminal psychologist Professor Makie to share with us his thoughts on the letter. He believes the letter is written by Miss Jian Yao under duress. She is most likely threatened by the Flower Cannibal no.1. The thoughts within the letter is coherent, and fully conveys her sincere and heartfelt love for Professor Bo Jinyan. Through a number of logical and grammatical analyse, he believes the contents of this letter is credible. However, he also thinks that Miss Jian Yao may have been killed shortly after the letter is written, which we are very sorry to hear about...

However, Professor Makie believes that Miss Jian Yao has accepted the existence of Professor Bo Jinyan's split personality. We believe her views on the issue will influence and persuade those who are still in doubt."

Xie Han smiles and looks at her: "Well done."

Jian Yao holds the glass tightly with her hand.

She thought she would die. The letter is what Xie Han's been waiting for. Her suicide note.

She refrained from writing the note earlier because she doesn't want to die. But that night, she was on the verge of a mental breakdown. She knew that another injection would turn her mad.

When she saw the FBI took Bo Jinyan away, she's made up her mind.

She is willing to die, but it must be a worthy death - as long as Xie Han can be brought to justice.

Jinyan, can you find the clues I hide in the letter?

I still believe you are my Jinyan. You are Simon. You will see them. Then you will find Xie Han, and find me...

— — — — —

For the next few days, he did not give her any more drugs, nor did he torture her. In fact, he even treated her wounds. She was treated like a guest. They had exquisite meals together.

But Jian Yao knows in her heart. The reason she is still alive, is because he wants to find another 'perfect' way to kill her.

— — — — —

Xie Han stands up. He smiles to her: "Guess where I am going today?" He straightens his shirt and makes sure his tie is in the right place.

Jian Yao does not answer. Xie Han doesn't seem to mind. He leisurely says: "Today, our little Simon... Oh.. and little Allen will have his psychiatric evaluation. Once they confirm he has split personality, as the news presenter says, his reputation will be completely ruined. He

will be spending the rest of his life in a mental institution, or the Pelican Bay Prison. Life Imprisonment.”

Jian Yao’s heart tightens. Xie Han disappears into the darkness. She hears his voice saying as he walks away: “He’s at the cliff’s edge. How can I not be there to see him with my own eyes?”

— — — — —

Outside the J. Edgar Hoover Building in Washington, US.

The winter sun. Bright, calm. and cool.

Bo Jinyan is wearing a thick black coat. He is surrounded by a group of FBI agents. He is handcuffed. A cap on sits low his head, covering his eyes and brows.

When the reporters spot Bo Jinyan and the FBI agents, they flooded to them with their cameras and questions.

“Professor Bo Jinyan, do you have split personality?”

“Are you Simon or Allen at the moment?”

“As a criminal psychologist, do you think you ought to be take responsibility of Allen’s crimes?”

“Did Miss Jian Yao’s letter leave you heart-broken?”

Bo Jinyan walks quickly and ignores the questions until he hears the last one. He pauses for a few seconds. But he doesn’t turn his head towards the reports. With the help of the FBI agents, he boards a bullet proof van.

The reporters take as many photos as they can before the van disappears.

— — — — —
In the car.

Bo Jinyan leans on the side of the wall. He is quiet. Two young FBI agents sit opposite him. They are not speaking either.

The van has been on the motorway for a while. There are two police cars accompanying the van. One travels in front of the van, leading the way. The second car follows closely behind.

After being on the motorway for about half an hour, the driver in the police car in front of the van reports to the other drivers: "There is an accident ahead. A lane has been closed and it is causing a traffic jam. If we want to make it to the hospital by the scheduled time, we should take a different route."

The two young FBI agents look at one another. Then one of them says: "We are not supposed to detour. Contact headquarters to arrange for help to direct traffic." The other officer takes a glance at Bo Jinyan. He holds on to his gun in the pouch.

Soon, there's a response from the headquarters. There has been a traffic light malfunction, which caused a serious accident. The whole area is congested. There is nothing much they can do.

"Detour." That's their only option.

Bo Jinyan closes his eyes, as if he is taking a nap.

Red lights. Red lights. Red lights. Green lights... the van travels on a secondary road, which is a lot more quiet than the main road. There are university dormitories and residential buildings alongside both sides of the roads. It's a workday, so there's hardly any pedestrians on the road.

“Shit!” says the driver. He’s hit another set of red lights. The police car passed it before it turned red, but the van didn’t make it in time. It is stuck behind the traffic lights together with the police car behind it.

“Tat.. tat... tat....” Inside the van, the driver taps his fingers on the steering wheel. Nobody speaks.

Suddenly Bo Jinyan asks: “What time is it?”

One of the officers looks at his wrist watch: “3:12 pm.”

Bo Jinyan then smiles. Then he lowers his head and covers it with his hand, in a brace position. He leans his body towards the wall. He did it in front of the two officers.

As the two officers are a little puzzled by his actions, they hear a sound that is getting louder and louder above their heads.

“Oh! Damn it!” They shout, and lower their heads and cover their heads with their hands too.

“Gong!” Suddenly the van is being hit by something. The whole van shakes. And those who are outside the van - pedestrians, people looking through the windows from the dormitories and apartments - are horrified with what they saw.

A military helicopter hovers above the van. The violent shake was caused by a mini rocket hitting the van. Then machine guns on the helicopter starts to shoot at the two police cars that are accompanying the van.

The police officers takes out their guns. One of them calls the headquarters: “We are ambushed! But... why are they from the military?!”

All the pedestrians are petrified. They scream and run for for shelter.

From one of the nearby buildings, a sniper aims at the officers that are inside the police car. One down, two down... soon all of them fall with a bullet going through their hearts.

As this is happening, a pair of eyes in an inconspicuous corner watches with great interest. The bullet proof van has rolled over to its side. It has hit the safety railings on the side of the road. There's smoke coming from the van.

"Eaaa..." the door is opened from the inside.

Bo Jinyan's black coat is covered with dust. His face has blood on it. He is holding a gun. He didn't fully close the door as he walks out of the van. The two officers that were sitting opposite him lie motionless on the floor. They have a red patch on their chest. Obviously, they've been shot.

He adjusts his cap, then quickly walks towards a side street. Soon, he disappears from the scene.

And the helicopter makes a turn, lifts its altitude and flies off into the clear blue sky.

— — — — —

The same day. Later in the afternoon.

Jian Yao is sitting in darkness. Her heart is unsettled.

Jinyan. What are his plans? What is he trying to do?

"Dong.." Jian Yao is familiar with this sound. It's the door opening. Then the footsteps that are like an evil curse sounds closer and closer to her.

Jian Yao sits on the sofa. Her hands are tightly clenched together. She waits for him to speak.

“Oh! Waiting for some news?” Xie Han takes off his leather jacket and throws it onto the sofa. He speaks with smile: “Are you still hopeful that you will live to see him again?”

Jian Yao’s heart feels like it’s been pricked by a needle. But she makes sure she looks calm and quiet.

“But...” He pours himself a glass of water: “It’s good news.”

Jian Yao picks up the remote and turns on the TV.

It’s a chaotic scene. There are many bodies covered in white clothes, and lots of people injured. The angry condemnation of the news reporters, and the embarrassed spokes person from the Military....

Jian Yao’s heart is pounding. Xie Han starts to speak, with joy and admiration in his voice: “What a perfect and intricate plan. No doubt, he used mind control techniques on that hacker kid. He managed to hack into the military control system and the traffic control unit. Every route, every point of attack, even the train he took to escape... It’s perfect. And the hacker kid ends up being in the hospital, poisoned. I heard he is in a critical condition...”

Jian Yao is in shock. Xie Han ignores her and continues: “Clean. Ruthless. It’s Allen’s style.”

Her palms are wet with cold sweat.

She made herself believe there is only one Jinyan. Everything is just a plan of his, to catch Xie Han. But the images on the casualties and the damage are right before her eyes.

Jinyan, Jinyan... is this true?

Should I still believe you, even when it's against all odds?

Once again, her thoughts cannot escape Xie Han.

He smiles: "Soon, he will come to find us."

Two days later.

A short advertisement appears on the classified section of the Washington Economic Times.

"Hi. J. I am back."

Chapter 81

All the furnitures are removed. The cage, sofa, bed, coffee table... nothing is there anymore.

In the large and empty space, Jian Yao stands in the middle of the room. Her hands are cuffed to long chains that hold her up. There is a spot light shining down onto her. She is like a marionette on a stage. Helpless and stiff. Her face is extremely pale. She is waiting for what fate is bringing her way.

A thick layer of tape covers her mouth. She can't make any sound. She can only watch what Xie Han is doing with her eyes.

Xie Han is in a suit today. He looks like a gentleman with a smile on his face. But Jian Yao knows behind this facade is a despicable pervert.

He holds up a mobile phone. He is standing just a few steps away from her. He looks at her and smiles: "Are you excited?"

Jian Yao keeps her body still. But inside, her heart is pounding so hard it feels like it's going to explode.

The person he is about to call, is Bo Jinyan.

Bo Jinyan sent him a phone number via the classified section of the Washington Economic Times. And Xie Han is about to dial the number now. He puts the phone on hands free mode.

"Do— Do—" It's connecting!

Jian Yao lifts up her head. Xie Han's smile freezes. He looks at the screen. He is waiting...

"Click." Someone answers the phone.

"Hi." An unfamiliar voice, with a smile in the tone.

Jian Yao's eyes widens.

The voice. The tone. It's... so different. Is that really Bo Jinyan? Her instincts tell her it's him.

Jinyan... is under disguise?

Xie Han replies: "Hi."

The man on the other end asks: "Where should we meet?"

"Two hours later...." Xie Han takes a look at Jian Yao: "I will send you the address."

"OK."

"Jian Yao is with me, my present to you."

The man pauses, then he says: "Great. Thank you."

— — — — —

That's the end of the conversation. They mentioned her in their conversation.

What does Xie Han mean by "a present"? What has he 'prepared' for Bo Jinyan? Fear goes through her.

Xie Han keeps the phone in his pocket. He looks at Jian Yao. He rips off the tape that is covering her mouth. He has a look of regret on his handsome face.

"Now, I really need to say goodbye to you, Jenny."

A cold chilly fear comes over her heart. She can't hold back her question: "You... are going to kill me?"

Now? When Bo Jinyan is on his way here?

They can't even say their last goodbye. He will find her body when he arrives? No!

"No." Surprising, Xie Han shakes his head. But before she is relieved, he shares a plan that is even more cruel.

"The person that will kill you... is Allen, of course." He says with a smile: "Oh... think about it. If he kills you with his own hands, it will be a painful blow to Simon. He loves you so dearly, he will not forgive himself."

He looks at the ceiling, and falls into a reverie. After a while, he looks down at Jian Yao again, and sighs: "... Pain and guilt will never leave him. You know, this is the beauty of split personality - if his will is weakened, he will fall into darkness, and be replaced by Allen. Simon

will not come back again. You see, Allen understands this too. That's why he is eager to kill you."

Xie Han's voice echoes in the vast empty space. Jian Yao's face is white as a sheet of paper. Her waist and ankles are so tightly strapped and stretched that they are starting to hurt.

No. He will not kill me.

If he is Simon, he will not kill me.

He is Simon. He is not anyone else.

She believes him. Even though there's only a glimpse of hope, she will not let go of it. She believes in him.

But Xie Han seems to know what's on her mind: "Oh, I forgot to tell you, Underneath where you stand, is a 300kg bomb. When it explodes, the whole villa and this place will be razed to the ground. But like you say in your letter to him, even when you turn to ashes, the ashes will represent the love you have for Simon."

A bomb powerful enough to wipe out everything ?

He buried the bomb there long ago. So that it will be ready when this day comes.

Suddenly she understands the reason why she is still alive. It's not only so that Bo Jinyan can kill her with his own hands. There is another purpose - a test to see if Allen really exist.

If Bo Jinyan is Allen, he will kill her, and Xie Han will leave the bomb alone. But only then will he truly accept and believe Allen - No matter how much he wants Bo Jinyan, he is equally cautious. This is the final test - using her life.

But if this is the trap he set, why did he tell her about it?

Does it matter? Xie Han doesn't care. She is already a dead person in his eyes. She can't change anything.

Simon is willing to give up his own life to save people that he doesn't know. He would never kill her. Jian Yao's heart sinks. Her body stiffens even more.

Jian Yao's pain does not escape Xie Han's eyes. He smiles: "Oh my gosh, I like the expression on your face. You are terrified, aren't you? My dear, do not be sad. The process of dying is terrifying, but that too is momentary. It's painful, but it will be over soon. After spending so many days with you, I must say that I like you, Jian Yao. Now, you should feel happy that I am allowing you to die in such a meaningful way."

— — — — —

Xie Han walks off. This might be the last time she hears his footsteps. Jian Yao quietly looks ahead. Tears start to stream down her face.

Above where Jian Yao is imprisoned, on ground level, a black bullet proof sedan leaves the garage and travels through the empty roads of a small town. It's travelling westward, past the border of a state, across the fields and finally arrive at an even more remote little town.

He drives along a private driveway, until he reaches a big gate installed with high voltage barb wires. The guard recognises him straight away and walks up to him: "Sir, welcome back,"

Xie Han smiles and get out of the car: "Today, I have a friend coming. I want level one security alert for the property."

"Yes sir."

After giving the instructions, he drives leisurely into the estate. He passes a few towers, where guards with guns are standing in the towers. They notice their master is back.

He enters the mansion and walks along the long empty corridor until he gets into the last room. Then he goes through a bullet proof door, into a study.

This is the room that is isolated from the rest of the house. There are some abstract but disturbing artwork hanging on the walls. A large gun cabinet filled with different types of guns. There are also a number of jars in the room, with human organs covered in preservative liquid.

Xie Han sits at the desk and switches on the computer.

It's the close circuit television images from where Jian Yao is imprisoned. She is still hanging in the same place. Chains around her hands. She looks pale and weak. Her eyes are red and swollen. It's obvious that she cried after he left.

Xie Han smiles. He takes a sip of his coffee, then he presses a button on the keyboard.

"Tong... Tong... Tong..." His mouth imitates the sound of lights turning on. At the same time, the rows of spotlights in the warehouse are turned on. The place looks like a stadium that has been lit up. Jian Yao closes her eyes as she tries to adjust to the sudden brightness.

He laughs at her, then speaks through the microphone: "Jenny, I am home. How are you feeling?"

— — — — —

In the warehouse.

Jian Yao finally opens her eyes. She looks around. The sound is coming out from the speakers but it feels as if Xie Han is in the same place as her. It makes her shiver. She notices there are several cameras that are pointing at different angles of where she is. They look like eyes that are starring at her.

“How long till he arrives?” Jian Yao asks with a coarse voice. She wants to know if he has fitted microphones there as well. She is deliberately speaking softly to test if he can hear her.

Soon, she hears Xie Han’s reply: “Soon.”

Jian Yao keeps quiet again. Xie Han does not seem to be in the mood for talking either. The place is silent again, except for the occasional sound of Xie Han’s singing coming through the speakers.

Jian Yao never paid attention to his singing before. There is nothing but his voice in this horrible place at this point in time. As she listens, she realises it is an old song - ‘How could an angel break my heart.’

“How could an angel break my heart, Why didn’t he catch my falling star...”

Jian Yao looks towards the entrance of the warehouse, the place where Bo Jinyan might appear.

How could an angel break my heart?

Jinyan, how can I let you die?

.....

Please.... kill me, so you can live.

Finally, after a long silence, she hears the noise of someone opening the door. "Dong.." The door is pushed open. Then footsteps that are evenly paced, steady and familiar come closer and closer towards her.

Jian Yao's eyes are filled with tears. She has mixed feelings inside of her: pain, sadness, happiness, numbness... all tangled together in her heart.

Soon, a person appears in the light. A tall slim man wearing a cap that covers most of his face. Jian Yao's heart tightens as his face becomes clearer and clearer in the light.

Finally, he is standing in front of her. He takes his cap off, lifts his head and looks at her.

Jian Yao's world has come to a halt.

Time, space, sound, light.... everything fades into an empty background. The man of her dreams is standing before her.

He is wearing a thick black coat, with a clean white shirt inside. No tie. He looks at her with those bright dark eyes. Yet, his gaze is cold and distant.

No warmth. No love.

Jian Yao: "Jinyan, there is a bomb."

- Please, make the right choice.

To be able to see you one last time... I have no regrets.

Unexpectedly, she hears two laughs simultaneously after she speaks.

One is from Xie Han, coming through the speakers. The other, from the Bo Jinyan standing in front of her.

He walks towards her, with a mocking and cold smile: "You don't trust me?" He looks at Jian Yao when he says this, but of course, he is talking to Xie Han.

Xie Han replies: "Finally, we will be seeing each other face to face for the first time. I have a present for you. It's time to show your sincerity for cooperation."

Bo Jinyan stands about two steps away from Jian Yao. He looks at the chains that are binding her.

"That's fair." He says to Xie Han: "Where will we meet after I kill her?"

Xie Han: "I will let you know later."

"OK." Bo Jinyan looks at Jian Yao again.

They are so close that she can smell his familiar masculine scent. The same handsome face. Those cold and arrogant stares. He still looks like her Bo Jinyan, but the coarse voice that is filled with hostility reminds her of Tommy, and the cynical smile on his face is not dissimilar to what Xie Han always has on his face.

"Ah..." She gasps as Bo Jinyan squeezes her chin. His strength is much stronger than usual. His finger nails digs into her skin.

She can't believe it. It's not possible... Has he really.... really....

Is this Allen?

Her Bo Jinyan, her Simon, is trapped in darkness forever? She can't see them again? She can't believe him anymore?

Is she going to die in his hand? In the hands of the evil soul that shares his same body?

No! Jinyan! Jinyan!

She subconsciously bites his finger. Soon, the smell and taste of blood fills her mouth. The man is angered. He uses his other hand to pull her hair. A sharp pain comes over her, and now she can't move.

Jian Yao stares at him, with tears on her face.

But there is no hesitation in him. Not pity, only the look of disgust on his face.

"Oh.... Simon's woman." He speaks with that coarse voice again: "Pity I have to kill you before getting a taste of you." Then he takes out a gun and points it to her head.

Jian Yao's body has lost all strength. She slowly closes her eyes. She can feel his breath on her face. She can hear the 'click' sound as he releases the safety latch of the gun.

Farewell, Jinyan. Goodbye, mother.

I am going to die here today.

I will not wake up to see you again. But I will never.... forget you.

On the screens, Xie Han eagerly waits as he looks at the images of the couple in the warehouse. He feels as if his blood is starting to boil with excitement.

He waits patiently.

He is waiting for a complete, perfect Allen to come to him.

Then Bo Jinyan lowers his head. He bites Jian Yao's lips.

Xie Han is surprised. But then he starts to laugh.

Because Bo Jinyan is looking at Jian Yao like she is his prey. The kiss is rough and barbaric. Jian Yao's lips are bleeding from his bite. And the look on Jian Yao's face is pityful. It is a combination of desolation, sadness, and anger.

It's understandable that Allen has desires for her too. If she isn't the final test for Allen's allegiance, Xie Han will not mind if Allen kept her as a toy.

So, if he wants to indulge himself for a while before killing her, he has no objections.

Xie Han looks at the screen. Bo Jinyan continues to kiss her forcefully. His hands are all over her body, squeezing and groping as he pleases, without any respect for her.

But... there is a certain feeling of familiarity. Jian Yao thinks to herself.

Bo Jinyan... Simon, once kissed her like this.

When was that again?

In Lin Yi Yang's villa by the sea, when they were discussing about whether a person can differentiate a person from their kisses. At the time, he was imitating someone else and kissed her in a way that is not in his usual style.

What happened after that?

As he finished his kiss, his tongue curled at the tips, then licked her from bottom to top. This is Bo Jinyan's subconscious little habit. Based on this, Jian Yao won the argument.

Their conclusion is ... from a kiss, one can judge whether it's from the same person.

.....

Hope returns to Jian Yao. She waits till the end of the kiss.... She tenses up as she waits for the answer...

He bites her again, the pain is spreading to the rest of her body.

When he is finally satisfied, he releases her tongue and steps backwards.

As his tongue is about to leave her mouth...

He pauses. Then, his tongue curls at the tips, then slowly licks her from bottom to top.

.....

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On the same day. Five hours ago. In the hospital.

Fu Ziyu is feeling marginally better. He can't sleep, so he asks an officer to help him onto a wheelchair so that he can go to Anam's room.

There are a few officers guarding the door. The room is completely closed up. You can't see through the rectangular glass panel on the door. The officer pushes him into the room. The first thing Fu Ziyu notices is that there is no one in bed. All the bed linen is neatly folded on the bed,

Then he went through another door into a bigger room that looks like an office. There are more than ten IT specialists there, in front of a few computer monitors. Anam is sitting in the center, giving instructions to them. He looks calm and well. There is not a trace of illness in him.

Fu Ziyu sits quietly. He doesn't want to interrupt them.

One of the officers makes a comment: "The escape... the plan was perfect. Professor Bo has the potential to be a top class criminal."

Everyone laughs. Fu Ziyu answers: "No, He can never be a top class criminal."

Because of his words, everyone recalls the 'battle' on the day. Mixed feelings come upon them, they quiet down again.

Anam suddenly thinks of something else. He turns to Fu Ziyu and asks him: "The day you talked to Professor Bo....Why did you cry?" It's a question that's been in his heart since he saw the incident. He does not care if it is appropriate to ask the question. He just wants to know the answer.

Fu Ziyu pauses for a while, then he answers: "Because I heard so called 'Allen's voice,'"

The last time he heard this voice was when Bo Jinyan was rescued from the cellar of Flower Cannibal Tommy. Bo Jinyan almost lost his life then. When he woke up after being in a coma for days, that's how he sounded like.

"Your voice..." Fu Ziyu asked him then. He simply answered: "While Tommy was away, I had a fever, and deliberately damaged my vocal cords."

Infection, Inflammation, pain... He allowed his condition to worsen so that he could use the different voice to pretend to be another personality. At the time, he was at risk of permanently damaging his vocal cords. Even though he did eventually recover from it, there was some irreversible damage done to his vocal cords.

Bo Jinyan would not have told Jian Yao about this. Because if she knew about this, she would have been heartbroken.

So when he was on the phone with Bo Jinyan, he recognised the voice straight away, and he knew how much pain Bo Jinyan went through to get the voice again.

As his best friend, he instantly understood his plan - to pretend to be Allen so he can get near to Xie Han. He sacrificed his reputation, and put himself on the line.... it's a risky move. He might end up with nothing.

His best friend. A lonely and arrogant man, willing to give up everything he has, for the woman he loves. That's why he couldn't hold back the tears.

.....

Fu Ziyu asks Anam: "So, how's the progress?"

Anam replies calmly: "Everything is going according to his plan. Soon, the two of them will return safely."

Chapter 82

Xie Han looks at the screen with a smile on his face.

He sees a 'beautiful' picture - A man has complete control over the woman. He is kissing her and his hands are all over her body. But the woman is like a petrified little bird, with no means of escaping from him.

The kiss is a short one. The man licks the blood on his upper lips. He steps back, and points his gun at her temple.

"Bye Jenny." He says in a coarse and excited voice.

Jian Yao closes her eyes. Her body is shivering. She tightens her fists, and grabs on to the chains...

"Pang!" A clean shot.

Bo Jinyan gives a mocking smile and puts his gun back in his pocket. He turns around, lifts his head and looks into one of the cameras.

Behind him, Xie Han can see Jian Yao's body. Her whole body is flopping down. There is a blood hole in her left temple. Obviously, the bullet went through her head.

"Oh..." Xie Han's smile deepens. He is so excited his hands are grabbing on to the corner of the table.

Allen. There's no doubt about it.

What a perfect test. What a beautiful death!

Bo Jinyan says with an insolent tone: "Hey, puppet, where are we meeting?"

He ridicules Xie Han by calling him a puppet. It's his way of telling Xie Han he thinks this test is childish and pathetic. But Xie Han doesn't mind at all. He leans back on his chair: "There's a car in the garage. Drive it out. I have set the destination inside its GPS navigation system."

"Ok." Bo Jinyan puts the cap back on his head, then he lifts his head to look into the camera again: "This woman, leave her here. I'll come back for her body."

Xie Han laughs: "Ok. Ok. She is all yours."

Bo Jinyan quickly leaves the underground warehouse. Xie Han sits at the table and looks at the screens. The place is so quiet. There is no sound

or movement at all, except for the blood on Jian Yao's forehead, dripping down onto the ground. A drop at a time, like a poignant but bright picture."

Xie Han can't wait for Bo Jinyan to arrive. He has no interest left in Jian Yao. He switches off the screens and walks out of the study.

— — — — —

Two hours later. In the State hospital.

Jian Yao slowly opens her eyes.

The first thing she sees is an unfamiliar ceiling. Drapes that are light blue in colour blocks the sun rays from coming through the window. She is lying on a bed. She is wearing a clean set of clothes, with IV drip attached to her.

Beside her bed, a nice looking man wearing hospital clothes is sitting in a wheelchair. He looks thinner than a few weeks ago. And there is IV drip attached to his arms too.

A wave of relief comes over her.

Ziyu.

Her head is still heavy, but she slowly sits up. She remembers the horrible underground warehouse where she was kept for the past few weeks, and everything that happened when she was there.

It's over. It's finally over.

— — — — —

After the violent kiss, Bo Jinyan moved his lips away. He stared at her, with his face just centimeters away from her.

He didn't say anything. He put his forefinger over his mouth. It's a sign to ask her to be quiet.

Her heart was pounding. What was he doing? Wouldn't Xie Han see that?

But then a strange thing happened. She could hear from Xie Han's voice from the loudspeaker. He gave an approving "Oh.." sound.

She was confused. Bo Jinyan then lower his head again, put his hand around her waist and kissed her.

It's a different kiss from the one he just gave her. There's still the smell of blood in both their breaths. He gently touched her chin, which was a little bruised from his much rougher squeeze earlier. He kissed her silently, softly, steadily, in a manner that is familiar to her. His hand tightened around her waist, as if he wanted her to merge into his body.

Tears were flowing down her cheeks. Soon, he let go of her. His fingers wiped away her tears gently. Then he moved back a few steps.

Their eyes met. Jian Yao bit her lower lips to stop herself from making any sound. He took a last look at her, and looked towards the camera: "Hey, Puppet, where are we meeting?"

— — — — —

Soon, Bo Jinyan left her again.

She was still hanging by the chains in the warehouse. But she guessed what just happened. Bo Jinyan must have asked Anam to change the images which Xie Han saw on his screen. Xie Han would think that she is dead, and completely believe Bo Jinyan is Allen. She thought she was going to die. But once again, it's only a plan. Bo Jinyan had everything under control!

But she was still worried for him. Bo Jinyan was on his way to see Xie Han. Why did he go alone?

After a while, she could hear someone coming into the warehouse. It's a few FBI agents. They quietly entered the room. Jian Yao gave them a signal to keep quiet. They then split themselves into two teams. The first team looked everywhere for video cameras and microphones and made sure they covered them with some sort of metallic cover.

The second team came to Jian Yao, to free her. Then they put her onto a stretcher.

The whole operation was swift and fast.

Soon, Jian Yao was carried to ground level. She saw sunlight for the first time in weeks. It was too bright for her. She lifted her hand to block the brightness. Tears flows down her face uncontrollably.

Once she was on the ambulance, one of the female agents assured her: "Miss Jian Yao, you are safe now."

Jian Yao asked immediately: "What about Bo Jinyan? Is he going to see Xie Han alone?"

The agent did not answer her. Then the medic came over and started to check her vital signs and examined the wounds on her body. Jian Yao had a high temperature. She was exhausted from the ordeal, soon she dozed off.

In the hospital room. Perhaps it's her movement that woke Fu Ziyu, he immediately looks up. They look into each others' eyes. Perhaps it's because they both had a near death experience, they just quietly gazes at each other. At this moment, no words are necessary. They smile at one another.

Fu Ziyu stretches his arms open, and gives her a hug.

“Where is Bo Jinyan?” Jian Yao asks him.

Fu Ziyu pauses, then he answers: “He’s probably arrived Xie Han’s estate by now. That’s his lair.”

Jian Yao’s eyes widen slightly. She asks: “What is his plan?”

If Bo Jinyan does not have split personality, then all the crisis, betrayal, drama... it’s all part of a trap he’s set for Xie Han.

But Bo Jinyan... how did you manage to achieve all that? And what is the next step? What are you planning to do?

Fu Ziyu laughs: “It’s a long story. It’s a sophisticated plan. So many people got involved. But it’s worth it. We saved you. Don’t worry, he will be okay. Let me bring you to a place, and you will understand.”

Jian Yao relaxes a little after hearing what Fu Ziyu- said.

Fu Ziyu is confined to a wheelchair, but Jian Yao is okay to walk by herself. One of the agents pushes Fu Ziyu’s wheelchair. The three of them goes to Anam’s hospital room.

The afternoon sun shines through the windows in the corridor. Jian Yao looks out and sees the sky. She thinks about the underground prison she was trapped for a few weeks. It’s only been a few hours since she is freed. But what a difference.

Fu Ziyu takes out a plastic bag from his pocket and passes it to Jian Yao: “I am returning it to the owner.”

Jian Yao takes it. She stops walking.

It's her 'suicide note'. Xie Han sent it to the TV station. Now it's back in her hands.

She looks at it. It's been neatly and carefully folded, and well preserved. Someone circled three of the sentences she wrote. The first line is "...to be someone like my father."

The second line is "first time we held hands? ...You said I was tickling you."

The last line is: "I've met my parent's expectations. I became someone they wanted me to be."

Jian Yao is pleased in her heart. He understood the clues. He deciphered them correctly.

On the day when they received the letter, everyone was very sad and touched. They couldn't imagine how wretched Bo Jinyan would be reading a letter like that.

But after the initial shock, Bo Jinyan quickly pointed out the clues Jian Yao left him:

"Someone like her father - a police. She..." He paused: "that time she tickled me.. we weren't holding hands. She couldn't have remembered incorrectly. That's the Killer Machine case. And lastly, her mother doesn't want her to become a police. So she is trying to tell us, that Xie Han disguised as an officer in the Killer Machine case."

Then he continues: "He can't be a sworn officer. I work with all of them very closely. Perhaps a community police, because a lot of community police helped in that particular case...." He suddenly stops, his eyes widens: "I think I know who he is."

.....

Now they have a drawing of Xie Han.

Anam almost hacked all the relevant surveillance sites he could in China, Hong Kong and the US. He found many footage of him... He frequently attends a university lecture in B city; he visited a lot of famous tourist attractions in Jian Yao's hometown; he lived as a low profile millionaire in Hong Kong. They found records of his properties. He even has a house in the suburb that Jian Yao and Bo Jinyan lives in. He was so close to them, lurking around in their neighbourhood.

His latest appearance was on the day Bo Jinyan escaped on his way to the hospital. The CCTV from a building a few streets away had images of him walking down a flight of the stairs. He must have a place somewhere inside the building, and used it as a base to monitor Bo Jinyan. From that image, they traced back some earlier CCTV footages, and they were able to find the villa which Jian Yao is imprisoned, and from there, they also detected the bombs that's buried underneath the villa.

Bo Jinyan knew Xie Han well enough. If the police tried to rescue Jian Yao forcefully, Xie Han would detonate the bomb. Therefore, he decided to stick with the original plan. He would disguise as Allen and find Xie Han.

.....

"Thanks to your letter, we were able to track him down much more quickly than we expected." Fu Ziyu said: "Jinyan kept this letter with him every day. He only passed it to me this morning to safeguard it for him."

Jian Yao's heart hurts when she heard that. She carefully folds the letter and puts it in her pocket.

— — — — —

‘Anam’ hospital room is the control centre for this operation. The curtains are closed. Ten or so computers are set up, with technical staff working attentively behind the computer screens. Anam is the leader for the technical team. There are also a number of FBI agents in the room.

Jian Yao looks at the first computer screen. There are two pictures on the screen. Each taking half of the screen. The background of both is the same - the warehouse that she was imprisoned. On the left hand side, the warehouse is empty. The chains that once bounded her were cut and hanging down to the ground. On the right hand side, a woman is still in the warehouse. Her left temple has blood hole, the result of a gunshot. And on the floor, there is a pool of blood.

Jian Yao asks: “This is...”

Anam hears her voice. He turns around, smiles at Jian Yao and says: “Samuel did it.”

An Afro-American with a FBI vest that is sitting two seats next to him gives Jian Yao a victory hand signal.

Jian Yao fully understands now. They have hacked into Xie Han’s system. So what he saw on his screen is not what’s really happening.

Even though she doesn’t know how it could be done, she is amazed by their talents and skills.

Jian Yao and Fu Ziyu sits in front of a different computer screen.

The images show the views through a front windscreen of a car. They can hear the breathing sound of a man. The images show that the man has arrived at an estate in the woods. There is a white mansion inside the estate.

These are images from a pinhole camera attached to Bo Jinyan. Through this camera and a small listening device they've put on Bo Jinyan, they are able to see and hear what he is seeing and hearing too.

An agent explains: "Although we have worked out the GPS location of the estate, we believe there are over ten hostages kept in this property."

"We will need time to come up with a rescue plan, and how to bypass the security system." Another agent continues: "So, we need Simon to distract him to buy us some time. But don't worry, we have troops scattered around the area, ready to attack if we need to. They only need two minutes to get Simon to safety."

Jian Yao nods and looks at the screen again.

Still... he's put his life on the line again, so he can save the other victims.

Bo Jinyan has entered the estate. He stops the gate. There are several guards with machine guns standing there. Obviously, instructions have been given to them to let Bo Jinyan in. They take a look at him and wave him to continue.

The car drives through the gardens and stops next a flower bed in the middle of the gardens.

Bo Jinyan opens the car door and steps outside. He looks around, and ignores the number of guards that are standing not far from him. They are all armed with guns.

Then, a tall man that is standing at the entrance of the white mansion slowly walks towards him. He is wearing a simple white shirt and trousers. He's obviously just tidied his appearance. He welcomes Bo Jinyan with a smile.

Bo Jinyan smiles back at him.

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

Chapter 83

5pm. The golden rays of the sunset shine through the window. Under the crystal Chandelier, two men are sitting at a dining table. One on each end. They are having dinner.

“What are your plans?” asks Xie Han.

Bo Jinyan glances at him: “What do you think of Russia?”

Xie Han smiles: “I like it. The heaven for drugs and weapons. Let’s go to Russia together.”

It’s decided. They raise their glass.

“To Russia.”

“To Russia.”

They have just finished their entree of smoked salmon. The servants dish up their main course. Xie Han adjusts his napkin and watches Bo Jinyan’s reaction.

A plate with a medium cooked steak appears before Bo Jinyan.

Bo Jinyan flashes a sarcastic smile, then he leisurely picks up his knife and fork. As he cuts the steak into small pieces, the juice flowed out from the steak shows streaks of blood. He picks up a small piece with his fork and puts it in his mouth.

Xie Han looks with approval.

Soon, Bo Jinyan has finished his beef. Salad and dessert is served next.

Xie Han stands up. He walks over to Bo Jinyan: "I've had enough to eat. Please excuse me. I will give you a tour of the mansion tonight. When you finish your meal, one of the servants will show you to your room."

Bo Jinyan is about to put a slice of cake into his mouth. He does not even look at Xie Han: "Ok."

As Xie Han is about to leave, suddenly, he notices from the corners of his eyes, that a force is coming at him. He tries to defend but it's too late. There is something poking his throat. Bo Jinyan has grabbed Xie Han by his collar with one hand. And he is holding a fork by Xie Han's throat with his other hand.

Their eyes meet. Bo Jinyan is not smiling. He has a look of disgust on his face.

A few minutes later.

"No more pathetic tests." Bo Jinyan lets go of him. He sits down and says: "My patience is running out."

Xie Han's throat is a little red and painful from the poke. But he is not angry. He laughs: "Ok. Ok. I am not trying to test you. I just want to see you eat some red meat."

Bo Jinyan pays no heed to his words.

Xie Han waves his hand. A few red laser dots on Bo Jinyan's body disappears. The snipers who are pointing their guns at Bo Jinyan relaxes.

Night. In Anam's hospital room.

It's almost midnight. But nobody intends to go to bed any time soon. All the IT specialists are sitting at their desk. The FBI agents and a rep from the army are gathered around a map, discussing the plan of attack.

Fu Ziyu is still very weak. His doctor orders him to get some rest. He has no choice but be wheel-chaired back to his room. But Jian Yao wants to keep up with the latest progress. She insists to stay on. But she is tired too. Soon she doses off in her chair. But after a short rest, she wakes up and immediately checks the screen. It's a view of a ceiling in a dark room.

It is Bo Jinyan's bedroom. He is lying in bed, wide awake. They can hear his breathing. Every now and then, he turns his body, or sits up to drink some water.

After dinner, Xie Han showed him around the estate. He invited Bo Jinyan to his underground cellar to view some of his prized booties/body parts taken from his victims. He also showed him some people that he's kidnapped and kept in cells. Bo Jinyan did a quick count. There were more than ten people imprisoned, including Yin Ziqi's fiancé, Lin Yi Yang. He looked pale and terrified. He had lost a lot of weight since Bo Jinyan last saw him. He was surprised to see Bo Jinyan there. But he was too afraid to ask any questions.

Xie Han said: "We'll have some fun tomorrow."

Bo Jinyan smiled: "Sure."

It was a 'pleasant' conversation. They didn't say very much, but they seemed to understand what's in each other's minds. When they reached

Bo Jinyan's bedroom, Xie Han made sure he was happy with the room before he said goodnight and left.

And Bo Jinyan remained calm at all times. He took a shower, then got changed and lie down on the bed.

He has a little microphone in his ear, which means he can hear what's going on in Anam's room. But he can't speak. Because he is sure the room is wired.

Although Jian Yao can't see Bo Jinyan, she can see what he is seeing. Her heart follows his every move. She is concerned for his safety. Even though the army and the FBIs have surrounded the estate, it only takes a few seconds for Xie Han to kill him if he wants to.

One of the FBI agent in Anam's room walks over to Jian Yao. He is in charge of ground operation for this case, a Caucasian in his forties.

Jian Yao smiles at him. He looks like a considerate and sincere man: "Jenny, we commend you for your bravery and wisdom. How are you feeling?"

Jian Yao smiles: "I am fine. Thank you. I want to thank you too. It's a risky plan and the FBI has put a lot of effort into this operation."

In fact, so many people are involved in this operation - the media, FBI, the army, Maryland University criminal psychologist... Everyone is cooperating with Bo Jinyan in setting up this trap for Xie Han. This is why Jian Yao almost believed the existence of Bo Jinyan's split personality. This lie is too grand. It's so 'ridiculous' that it's hard not to believe.

The FBI agent laughs, He says seriously: "Simon has given a lot for our country. We have great respect for him. And Xie Han is a cunning and cruel criminal. We cannot afford to let him slip. Therefore, we have no reason to refuse Professor Bo's requests."

— — — — —

A few hours later, Anam comes to her.

This genius hasn't slept for days. He looks tired. He quietly walks up to her, and takes a seat beside her. He puts something on the table that looks like a walkie talkie.

"He can hear you if you speak into this. Just press the red button when you speak." Then he leaves and walks back to his seat.

Jian Yao looks appreciatively at Anam. She picks up the device.

"Hi, Jinyan." She speaks with a soft low voice.

Everyone in the room can hear their conversation. They all smile. Some of them turn around and look at her.

Jian Yao is not paying any attention to the rest of the people in the room. She is just staring at the screen. About one second later, Bo Jinyan lifts his hand and touches his nose.

It's a sign he's heard her.

She feels both happy and sad at the same time. But more than that, she really misses him. A feeling that words alone cannot convey. She pauses for a while, then all she can say is a simple phrase of encouragement: "You can do it. I believe in you."

Everything has come to a stand still. No one says a word.

After a while, Bo Jinyan gets out of bed and switches on the light. He walks to the bathroom.

He stands in front of the mirror, and stare at his own image...

... to stare at her.

He wants her to see him.

Jian Yao looks at his handsome face. Then he bends down, splashes some water over his face and dries it with a towel. Then he looks into the mirror again, and gives a faint smile.

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After their 'greeting', Jian Yao relaxed a bit. An FBI agent escorted her back to her room to rest. She asked the nurse to wake her up in a few hours. But when the time came, Fu Ziyu told the nurse it's not necessary, that Jian Yao needed the rest.

If Bo Jinyan was there, that's what he will do! Rest well, Jian Yao. When you wake up, he will be back.

— — — — —

In the control room.

They are ready for action. All the agents, officers and Anam etc are doing their final briefing.

"5:20am." says the agent. "Simon, in fifteen minutes, we will start our attack. The helicopter will come and bring you out."

Bo Jinyan is awake. He stands on the balcony, looking out to the surrounding woods and forests. He uses his finger to tap the marble table top his hand is resting on.

He's survived the night. He looks at his watch: 5:26am. He walks back into the room and takes a sip of water.

“Knock... knock...” A strong tap on the door.

Everyone in the control room tenses up. They don't expect Xie Han to wake up so early in the morning.

Someone suggests: “Perhaps we should start our attack sooner.”

The chief in command keeps silent.

Bo Jinyan opens the door. Xie Han is standing outside his room in a white track suit. He leans against the wall and smiles at him: “Early bird catches the worm. I am about to go for my morning exercise. I'm sure you will be interested.”

Bo Jinyan smiles.

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They are on the roof of the mansion. It's an observation deck.

Standing on the deck, Bo Jinyan has an unbroken 360 degrees view of an entire surrounding area - the meadows, the gentle slopes of the nearby hills, the forests... There are two sniper rifles strapped on the edge of a corner on the observation deck.

Xie Han's five body guards are standing not too far away from them, at a distance of around fifteen metres. Xie Han picks up one of the rifles, he aims it to the ground, then turns his head towards Bo Jinyan: “L115A3. It's my favourite.”

Bo Jinyan takes up the other rifle. He looks through the scope and says to Xie Han: “Yes, it's my favourite rifle too.” He glances at his watch. 5:32am. Two more minutes till the attack.

.....

The chief in command asks Anam: "Have we penetrated his security system yet?"

Anam smiles and adjusts his glasses: "Yes, of course."

"Ok." Chef in command orders: "No change to the original plan. We will attack in two minutes. Hunter no.1 Fighter Jet will assist Simon."

.....

Bo Jinyan hears everything that's said in Anam's room. But there is no change whatsoever in his facial expressions. He aims at a patch of grass. Suddenly he remembers Jian Yao.

Soon. My lady.

I will be back by your side.

"Choose your target." He hears Xie Han's voice. He takes his eyes away from the scope and looks towards the ground. Xie Han has 'released' his prisoners. From a distance, they look like ants crawling around.

Obviously, Xie Han wants to use them as living targets. It's a hunting game, using humans as their preys. From Xie Han's expression, Bo Jinyan knows it's not the first time he has played this game.

Bo Jinyan looks at the ragged prisoners, he curls the edge of his lips: "Oh.... it's too easy."

Xie Han's face glows with joy.

Then they hear a few gun shots, and the laughter of a few man from somewhere that's below the observation deck. Then all the prisoners panics and starts running.

"Is this... more fun?" Xie Han asks.

Bo Jinyan looks at him: "Well, I'll give it a try. If you don't mind, I would like to make the first shot."

"Be my guest."

Bo Jinyan bends down. His eyes look through the scope once again. At the same time, he quickly glances at his watch.

Ten seconds to go.

Since Anam has penetrated Xie Han's security system, the army is already hiding within the grounds of the estate,

He counts in his mind: "10, 9, 8 3, 2, 1!"

Engine sound.

The engine sound becomes louder and louder. Then they hear the sound and feel the movement of a whistling wind beneath them. In a split second, Bo Jinyan turns towards Xie Han and points his rifle in front of Xie Han's heart.

But once Xie Han heard the whistling wind, he instinctually draws out a gun and points it at Bo Jinyan.

Their eyes meet. In close range. Two men, Two guns.

Bo Jinyan's gun is pointing at Xie Han's heart. And Xie Han's gun is pointing at Bo Jinyan's forehead. Xie Han's body guards were initially shocked by what's happened. Then they quickly point their guns at Bo Jinyan. One of them shouts at Bo Jinyan: "Drop your gun."

Then they heard some gun shots on ground level.

Bo Jinyan looks coldly at Xie Han. Xie Han's mouth curves into an ironic smile. Suddenly, he realises things are not quite going his way anymore.

"Oh shit!" He mutters.

Then Bo Jinyan hears a voice speak to him from the control room:
" Simon, get down!"

He ducks down immediately. At the same time, Xie Han pulls his trigger. The bullet misses Bo Jinyan's throat by centimetres. A helicopter hovers above them. There is a row of machine guns attached to it. The pilot fires at all those who are standing on the observation deck.

Smoke is everywhere. The body guards are shot. They fall onto the ground. Xie Han sensed something was wrong so he followed Bo Jinyan's lead to duck down, but he was still a fraction too slow. His right leg is shot. Blood gushes out of the wound.

Bo Jinyan wastes no time. He tries to shoot Xie Han!

But Xie Han is well trained. He manages to hide behind a table that is turned sideways. He tries to make his way to the stairs. If he can get downstairs quickly, he can run to the lift that takes him to his room, where there is a secret tunnel that he can use to escape.

Yet, he is not fast enough. A second helicopter comes up from behind. Another row of machine guns are pointing straight at him. At the same time, a few soldiers from the army have come up to the observation deck and surrounds him.

Bo Jinyan stands up. He shakes off the dusk on his clothes. He looks at Xie Han.

There is no way he can escape now.

Xie Han's face is pale. But he also looks relaxed.

"Put down your gun. Kneel down." says one of the FBI agents.

He throws his gun away and reaches both hands to touch the back of his head. But he didn't kneel down like the agent asked him to. Instead, he turns around and faces Bo Jinyan.

He starts to laugh.

"Simon. Simon, Simon - You don't understand, do you? You give yourself to save these foolish and mediocre people. But do they understand you? You choose a lonely path, and a foolish way to live."

He is slowly stepping backwards, closer and closer to the edge of the deck. One of the agents asks Bo Jinyan if they should shoot Xie Han. Bo Jinyan slowly shakes his head.

"Simon. I will die here today. But in the same way, your life also ends here." He seems to have resumed his usual composure: "You didn't win. We will meet again in hell... my Bo Jinyan."

He then jumps off the edge. Everyone runs towards the edge. They see a body falling in mid air, like a rock sinking to the bottom of the ocean, like a leaf flowing through the air towards the ground...

"Pang.." Suddenly, there is a huge explosion. His body becomes a fireball. Then all they see are ashes flying in the air and dripping like rain onto the ground.

No one speaks.

Xie Han strapped a bomb to his body. Like Bo Jinyan said before, he will not allow himself to be captured. Before his death, he turned himself into a ball of ash.

The officers and agents behind him continue with their rescue plan. The morning sun is shining. There is a golden glow over the estate. Bo Jinyan looks around. The agents have reached the victims and are helping them to the ambulances.

He turns around, and boards the helicopter that is waiting to bring him to the hospital, where Jian Yao is waiting.

Chapter 84

This is the first time Jian Yao managed to sleep for so many hours in weeks.

She is not imprisoned by Xie Han anymore. There's no blinding white light. No drugs and hallucination. No footsteps or Xie Han's voice appearing suddenly.

However, her mind is still too unsettled for a good sleep. In her dream, she was walking alone, searching. She didn't know what she was looking for, but there was a strong desire in her mind. When she finally opens her eyes, she understands why she is so anxious - even in her sleep. She immediately calls for a nurse to accompany her to Anam's room.

She looks at the clock on the wall. It's 10:00am. She quickly washes up. She stands in front of the mirror and splashes some water over her face. Then she looks up and stares at herself in the mirror. She is still weak and pale. And her heart is filled with concern for the man she loves dearly.

Soon, she hears someone opening her room door from behind her. She is drying her face with a towel. She quickly says: "I won't be long. Please accompany me to Anam's hospital room."

Jiao Yao hears a 'pang' sound. The person has closed the door. Then she hears footsteps coming towards her.

Her body stiffens. Before she can turn around, there's a pair of arms around her waist. He holds her from behind, and pulls her into his embrace.

Jian Yao gasps. She quickly turns around and put her hands around his neck.

A familiar scent surrounds her. He still has his big black coat on. It has a faint smell of gunpowder. His short thick black hair... The handsome but cool look on his face... She looks at him. He is also staring at her.

All the stress and pain that's built up over the past weeks starts to melt away. She is ecstatic to see him.

"Jinyan... Jinyan..." She subconsciously repeats his name. This is real. It is not a dream. She reassures herself by saying his name, again and again. He is back, and she is safe. They are finally together again.

Bo Jinyan lowers his head and kisses her. She belongs to him. He can hear her every breath, and her every sob. He holds her in his arm. The room is quiet and still, except for the digital display on the medical monitoring equipment that is beside the bed.

He is holding her so close it's like their bodies are welded together.

She can feel his cold and gentle breaths. She closes her eyes as they kiss. But Bo Jinyan keeps his eyes open. He refuses to miss any opportunity that he can look at her face. Then he notices the red marks on her neck, and the bruises on her arms which are under her sleeves.

He lets go of her. Jian Yao is lost in his tender kisses. She slowly opens her eyes and looks at him. He moves his hand and carries her to the bed.

“I have slept for a long time.” She says softly.

“You need more rest.” He says and sits down on the bed beside her. He gently glides his fingers over the bruises and marks, then his hand returns to touch her face.

“Ah..” Jian Yao lifts her hand to hold his.

Bo Jinyan is reluctant to let go of her too. He takes his coat off and lies down on the bed with her. He carefully pulls her into his arms and kisses her again.

Jian Yao doesn't ask him about Xie Han. She doesn't ask how Bo Jinyan escaped. And he doesn't want to tell her. But her heart still aches as she thinks of what he might have gone through, and tears stream down her cheeks. He quietly kisses away her tears. He hears some footsteps coming toward their room. He quickly gets out of bed to lock the door, then he returns to Jian Yao.

Warm sun rays shine through the hospital ward windows. His hand clenches hers, and with his arm supporting his body weight, he climbs up on top of her. He kisses her hair, then her forehead, nose, mouth, neck, her every finger... gently and slowly, moving an inch at a time. Jian Yao can't stop herself crying. But she can't stop the smile on her face either. Bo Jinyan's touch has soothed any remaining fear and doubt that is in her mind. Everything is back to its original place. There is no need to fear anymore. All the dark and painful memories are wiped away by the assurance of his love. They are completely lost in one another's presence.

— — — —

When twilight comes, Fu Ziyu can't wait any longer.

Bo Jinyan went straight into Jian Yao's room. He didn't talk to anyone along the way, didn't stop by Anam's room, didn't even get checked by the doctor after his showdown with Xie Han... The FBI is still waiting to talk to him.

Fu Ziyu is wheel chaired to Jian Yao's room. He asks the other agents to leave first, then he takes out a key to open the door.

He is a little surprised that the room is so quiet.

He sees the two of them squeezing in the single hospital bed. They are lying sideways, facing and embracing each other, like two kids try to keep warm by hugging together. Bo Jinyan is a big tall man, he takes up most of the bed. Jian Yao curls up and tugs herself in his arms.

He looks at them for a while, then he quietly closes the door.

He smiles. What's the hurry? Let them enjoy each other's company for a while, without any interruptions from the outside world.

— — — — —

Jian Yao is woken up when Fu Ziyu closes the door. She opens the eyes and finds Bo Jinyan looking at her. He is aware too. She looks at the clock on the wall. They have been sleeping in that position for the whole afternoon.

Jian Yao moves her head to touch his chest. Bo Jinyan looks at her. His heart has a familiar congested feeling.

He first felt this on the first day of her disappearance. It's something that is very foreign to him. He's never felt this way in his life. Bo Jinyan slowly realised what it is. Whenever he feels Jian Yao is in pain, or unhappy, he has this congested feeling. It's a natural response. It's

because your heart aches when you see or sense the person you love is going through rough times.

“Aren’t they waiting for you?” Jian Yao asks him: “Perhaps you should see them first?”

Bo Jinyan tightens his arms around her: “My work is done. We have rescued all the prisoners. Surely they can tell how important you are to me? My priority is to be with you.”

Jian Yao laughs. After a while, she touches his neck and asks softly: “Your voice... can it be restored?”

Bo Jinyan looks at her. He knows her heart aches for him. So he lied: “Of course.”

Jian Yao is relieved. But then she hears him say: “But I don’t intend to restore it.”

Jian Yao: “.... why?”

He glances at her: “Don’t you think this voice is more attractive?”

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One month later. In the B City airport.

The New Year is only a few days away. The airport is packed with people, ready to leave or arrive at B City to spend the holidays with their families. Bo Jinyan has his arm around Jian Yao’s waist. Fu Ziyu and Anam follow behind them. They are pushing the luggage and giving the loving couple plenty of private space. Yin Ziqi and Lin Yi Yang are reunited in America. They will be spending their New Year together in the US.

Jian Yao sees three familiar faces once she steps outside the customs area. She is so excited. She leaves Bo Jinyan's arms and runs up to greet them.

"Mom, Xiao Xuan, Xunran!" She wraps her hands around her sister and her mom. Li Xunran stands by their side. She looks at him. He smiles back.

Bo Jinyan and the others join the crowd. They greet one another. Then the men look at the three ladies who are still crying and cuddling.

Jian Yao is overjoyed to see her mother and her sister. At one stage, she thought they'd never meet again. She is the least teary of the three. Jian Yao's mom looks at her daughter, who's obviously lost weight through the ordeal. She holds her daughter's hand and ask where she was hurt and why was she kidnapped etc. Jian Yao tries to play it down and gloss over the details. She just reassures her mom that everything is fine now. But the questions inevitably bring up some unpleasant memories. Tears fall uncontrollably down Jian Yao's heart.

Bo Jinyan is standing beside her. For the past month, he has only seen her smile. It's the first time she's cried so much since their reunion in the hospital. As he sees the tears, the familiar congested feeling in his chest is back again. But he is used to it now. And while it's slightly frustrating, he is happy that he can feel this way. He has found someone worthy enough for him to care about so much.

While his eyes only have room for Jian Yao, Fu Ziyu and Anam are waiting for some interesting 'drama'. Fu Ziyu has figured out, from his few phone conversations between him and Jian Xuan, that although Jian Yao's mom likes him very much, she is less approving of Bo Jinyan.

But Bo Jinyan wants to be her son in law.

And it has never occurred to Bo Jinyan that his future mother in law doesn't like him. How is that possible?

So, when the ladies finally let go of one another, he steps forwards with a smile: "Hi Auntie. Hi Jian Xuan. How are you?"

Even though Jian Yao has already told them she is in love with Bo Jinyan, they can't accept the fact that this strange young genius is going to be their future son/brother in law.

"Hello, my great god brother in law." Jian Xuan quickly greets him.

Obviously, this 'title' pleases Bo Jinyan. He curls his lips into a wider smile.

Jian Yao's mom looks at her daughter. Then she takes a look at Bo Jinyan, and gives a small sigh in her heart. She nods and says to Bo Jinyan: "Hi. Thank you for looking after Jian Yao. Well, as long as the two of you are happy and well... that's good."

Fu Ziyu and Anam are both surprised and disappointed. That's it? Just one sentence, and she's given her approval? It's too easy!!

Perhaps, there is a certain blessing to those with low EQ? Not only his girlfriend is so gentle and caring, even her mother is so nice to him?!

Jian Yao stands beside Bo Jinyan. She smiles with confidence, as if she already knows her mom will accept Bo Jinyan into the family.

Bo Jinyan is oblivious to all these emotions and thoughts. He says to Jian Yao's mom: "We are perfect for each other. You don't have not worry at all."

Jian Yao mom's don't know how to reply: "... ok... good."

Jian Yao quickly pulls his sleeves to ask him to shut up. The others just smile.

— — — — —

A wise woman anticipates conflicts and takes steps to defuse the situation before it becomes a problem. While Jian Yao was still in the US, she has made several phone calls home to talk the matter over with her mom and her sister.

Even though mom is not keen for Jian Yao to find a man that works with law and order, she can tell from the conversations that her daughter loves this man. She knows that Jian Yao is very stubborn when it comes to love and will not abandon this relationship easily. Besides, Jian Yao assured her over and over again that Bo Jinyan's arch enemy is dead, and they are no longer in any sort of danger. At the end of the day, Jian Yao's mom just wants her daughter to be happy. She also feels that perhaps it is fate that brought those two together. So, after some persuasion, she agreed.

That night, Fu Ziyu and Anam return to their homes in B City. Jian Yao's family, Bo Jinyan and Li Xunran take another flight back to Tung city.

Once they are back in their hometown, Bo Jinyan suddenly remembers Jian Yao has to go home with her mother and sister tonight.

Bo Jinyan uses his brain a lot for his line of work. Both the quality and quantity of sleep is very important to him. His usual 'straight as a log' sleep posture has long been replaced by 'cuddling Jian Yao' sleep posture. He is not enthused at all to have to spend the entire new year holiday sleeping by himself. But he understands Jian Yao has to go home.

Jian Yao doesn't think too much about this issue. She smiles at him and says: "See you tomorrow."

Bo Jinyan answers: "No, I am not used to sleeping by myself anymore. I am sure you feel the same way. So I can go to your house." Then he turns around to say to Jian Yao's mom: "Auntie, let's go."

All three ladies are stunned. Jian Yao blushes.

Even though Jian Yao's mom suspects they might be already living together in B City, it's still inappropriate as they are not married yet. She makes a little cough, and looks at Jian Yao. Jian Yao blushes even more. She says to mom: "Mom, why don't you and Jian Xuan start walking first. I'll catch up with you soon. I will have a quick word with him."

Jian Xuan gives a little laugh and pulls mom's hand to start walking. Jian Yao gives Bo Jinyan a disapproving glance: "Be careful of what you say in front of my mom!"

That night, Bo Jinyan reluctantly returns to his own house. When Jian Yao gets home, her mother asks: "The two of you are... living together... for a while now. Are you planning to get married?"

Jian Yao blushes: "Perhaps in a couple of years."

She is only 24 years old. She is not in a hurry to get married. Besides, as long as they are together, it doesn't matter when they go through the ceremony.

When they were in the US, one of the FBI agents asked the same question. Bo Jinyan said at the time: "Soon, I'm planning it now."

Not long after they began their relationship, Bo Jinyan went ahead and ordered the wedding ring and started making plans for the wedding. But because he is such a particular and fussy man, it will probably take him a long time to get the preparations done. So, another two years... that sounds about right.

— — — — —

On New Years Eve, Bo Jinyan is invited to Jian Yao's mother and stepfather's house for lunch. Given Bo Jinyan's arrogant personality, there's not much conversation between him and the other family members. However, he is a talented and attractive man, and Jian Yao is there to help smooth any rough patches. So, overall, it is a pleasant meal.

After lunch, Jian Yao walks him to the door. He refuses to go. He looks her in the eye: "Are you coming to my house tonight?"

Jian Yao blushes, and nods her head.

How can she leave him to spend New Year Eve by himself, alone in that big and empty house?

They go back to the villa together. Naturally, they head to the bedroom straight away. As everything is behind them now, and there are no cases that's bothering Bo Jinyan at the moment, he thoroughly enjoys the time with her. Around 4pm, Jian Yao feels like she's been in a fight and all her bones are aching. Bo Jinyan, though, maintains a satisfied smile throughout, and mutters: "What a beautiful New Year's Eve!"

Jian Yao throws a pillow at him: "It's not even night time yet!"

Bo Jinyan looks at her with a smile: "Let's go fishing."

Jian Yao can't help but laugh. But then she thinks about the many Christmases and New Years he spent alone, she just wants to satisfy all his wishes. Now that he is satisfied.... in that area, it is natural that he wants to satisfy his hunger too.

"Sure." Jian Yao sits up in the bed: "But it's quite cold today, I am not sure if we can catch anything."

He replies slowly: "I am sure we will catch something."

After they settle at a spot and cast out the fishing line, Bo Jinyan excuses himself: "I'm going for a walk."

Jian Yao didn't think too much about it. She is well aware that he has no patience for fishing.

She hears his footsteps getting further and further away. She enjoys the peace and quiet. The long rays of the sunset settles on the surface of the water, The buoys lie quietly on the water. She feels contented and peaceful.

But as she has predicted. There's not much fish today. She's been there for hours, but she only manages to catch two small fish. As the night falls, the temperature drops. A long silver moon is hanging in the blue sky. Jian Yao hears footsteps from behind her. She knows it's Bo Jinyan coming back. She doesn't turn back, and says to him: "Time to go. Let's go back and watch the Spring Festival Gala ."

(Note from TB: The Spring Festival Gala is a variety show, featuring musical, dance, comedy, and drama performances etc. It is a ritual for many Chinese families to gather in front of the TV to watch it together after their reunion dinner.)

Watching the Spring Festival Gala together is like achieving a milestone with him. He used to be so against doing 'festive stuff' together.

"Jian Yao." He is standing behind her.

A very gentle but formal tone. She is slightly surprised. She puts down the fishing rod and turns around. It's a scene she doesn't expect to see.

Under the moonlight, Bo Jinyan is standing about five steps away from her. He's changed into a black suit. He's even put a bright coloured tie on. He looks strikingly handsome.

He is holding a bunch of red roses in his hand. His eyes are fixed on her face.

Jian Yao's heart starts to pound. He looks at her with a faint smile.

And in between them, a big turtle is moving slowly. Yes, it's Chen Mo. On his back, there is a black velvet box. Jian Yao can see a large sparkly diamond ring inside the box.

Bo Jinyan follows behind Chen Mo. They are slowly walking towards her.

But after a couple of steps, Chen Mo stops. He scans with his little eyes the tiny hump that is ahead of him. He tries to go over it but his limbs are too short. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts, he decides to give up. He hides his limbs and head back into the shell.

Bo Jinyan frowns. He lifts his leg and gently pushes Chen Mo up past the hump. Then he gives him a little kick. It's a command - keep crawling!!

Even though his actions are gentle, Jian Yao feels a little sorry for the poor turtle. She rushes up and picks up Chen Mo. She complains to Bo Jinyan: "Why did you kick him?"

Bo Jinyan stands in front of her. He does not say a word. Jian Yao feels a little uneasy with his gaze, she lowers her head, and looks at Chen Mo and the ring.

Against the beautiful backdrop of moonlit river, and the lush meadows around them, Jian Yao feels like she is transported into a different realm, where all she can feel is his unrelenting and tender love for her.

"Marry me, Jian Yao."

Marry me, my lovely Jian Yao.

The love of my life. The woman who touched my heart.

I was once so lonely, drifting through life, all by myself.

Until I met you.

Tender-hearted. Beautiful. Exceptional.

Words alone cannot convey my feelings for you. If I have to summarise it, this is it - I love you, with all my wisdom, and with all that is in me. And I will continue to love you for the rest of my life.

(The end)